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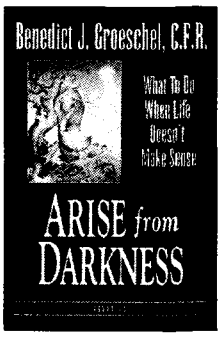

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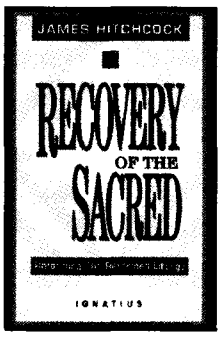

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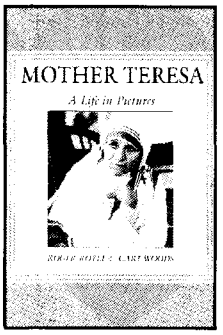

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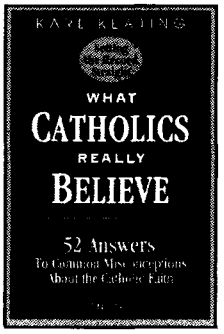

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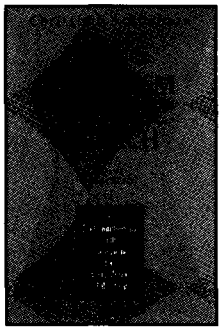

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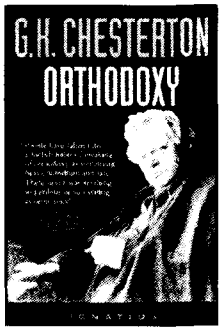

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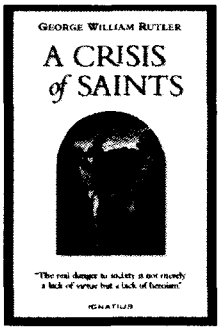

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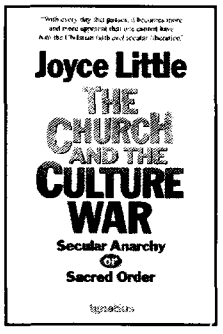

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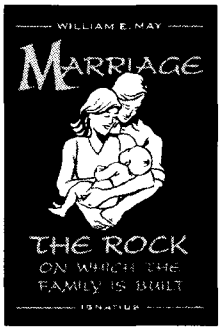

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FIRST THINGS

A Monthly Journal of Religion and Public Life

November 1995 • Number 57

CORRESPONDENCE 2 The culture war's "hard truths"; the end of positivism; Protestant-Catholic differences; paranoia; T. S. Eliot

THIS TIME 6 *James Nuechterlein* For All the Saints

OPINION 8 The Do-It-Yourself Guide to Theological Erudition
Gilbert Meilaender Defending Diversity
C. M. Naim Getting Real About Christian-Muslim Dialogue
David Quinn To Be a Conservative in Ireland: A Lament

ARTICLES

14 *Amy A. Kass and Leon R. Kass* What's Your Name?

26 *Dinesh D'Souza* The Crimes of Christopher Columbus

34 *Gregory C. Sisk* The Moral Incompetence of the Judiciary

REVIEW ESSAYS 40 *Jeffrey Burton Russell* Getting Satan Behind Us

46 *Mary Ann Glendon* Lost in the Fifties

50 *Stephen M. Barr* The Atheism of the Gaps

BOOKS 54

A. J. Bacevich The Age of Extremes by Eric Hobsbawn
David F. Wells The Assurance of Things Hoped For by Avery Dulles
Brian Murray The Anti-Egotist: Kingsley Amis, Man of Letters by Paul Fussell
Russell Hittinger The Return of George Sutherland by Hadley Arkes; . . . *and* Briefly Noted

THE PUBLIC SQUARE 71 A Continuing Survey of Religion and Public Life
Richard John Neuhaus
This Month: Alien Nation, *etc.*
Poetry by *Donna Henderson* (7), *Jeanne Murray Walker* (25), *Brian Doyle* (33), *John Whitworth* (39)

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The Culture War Front

In "Hard Truths About the Culture War" (June/July), Robert H. Bork correctly identifies the most important fronts where our culture is under attack, but I think he gives too much credit (or blame) to liberal ideology. Could the ideologically motivated "cultural elite" of the media, academe, and entertainment industry really have brought about our current state of cultural decay all by themselves? Is ideology really sufficient explanation for the devastation we have witnessed? At the risk of sounding Marxian, I would suggest that there are material as well as ideological forces behind the cultural and moral malaise.

Madison Avenue encourages and exploits American consumers' vanity, lust, and lack of self-control. Moreover, it has an interest in undermining cultural values that lead to self-control, since those values limit our receptivity to its advertising ploys. Appeals to sex sell products, and if Americans learned to say no to sex, who knows where it might lead? We might next work up the nerve to say no to whatever Madison Avenue is hawking this month. The last thing advertisers want is for Americans to lead contented lives of simplicity, fidelity, and responsibility. They happily collude with liberals in our culture's degeneration in a short-sighted effort to boost sales.

Bruce A. Lawrence
McLean, VA

When Robert Bork says that conservatives are "intimidated" by the egalitarian passion that has fueled the growth of government, he does not go nearly far enough. Republican thinking about government actually mirrors that of Democrats. For instance, when it comes to remedying the social pathologies of the underclass, conservatives and liberals are equally likely to reach for the levers of federal power. Liberals engineer ever more complex systems of sticks and carrots to coax people off the dole. Republicans brandish federal laws dictating to state governments that unmarried mothers may not receive AFDC benefits. If one thing is clear from the past thirty years of social policy it is that federal legislators and bureaucrats are several light-years removed from the wisdom necessary to do either of these things. . . .

Brent Orrell
Washington, D.C.

Robert Bork's essay on cultural decline is like a lot of what one hears from cultural conservatives these days: it is relentlessly pessimistic. Not only are we going to hell in a handbasket, Bork argues, but the handbasket is moving a lot faster than we had thought. I wonder, though, whether this pessimism isn't being carried a bit far. I work in a large, secular university—the sort of place that gives pessimists a lot to be pessimistic about, or so one would think. But I see positive signs everywhere. A decade or two ago, drugs were widely regarded in academic circles as a lifestyle choice on a par with having a beer after dinner. Now, only crackpots think cocaine use or heroin use is a socially or morally neutral act, and even marijuana defenders seem to be in hiding. Only a few years ago, drive-through divorce was thought by intellectuals to be an unqualified good. Now secular, politically correct academics talk seriously about the need to restrain divorce, to keep families intact for the children. And the wackier strains of feminist thought notwithstanding, fathers are coming back into fashion. One can even express concern about teenage sex without raising eyebrows.

All these trends are examples of academics catching on to the havoc they have wrought: a generation ago the elite culture shifted on drugs and sex and families, the mass culture soon followed suit, and the result was social disaster. It will take a long time to clean up the mess. But a sea change—a *positive* change—is happening in the elite culture, one that few could have foreseen even six or eight years ago. It is still incomplete, but it's real. And it may be the first step toward saving the society: posi-

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tive changes can filter through to the mass culture just like negative ones. Some optimism, maybe even a little celebration, might be in order.

This change may yet topple the greatest intellectual orthodoxy of all, the view that serious religion is either crazy or dumb. I can't speak for other disciplines, but in law schools (Bork's old home) religious conviction is treated much more respectfully than it used to be. The First Amendment literature of the 1970s tended to treat faith as a danger to democracy that must be contained at all costs. Today a growing strand of the literature talks about how the state should try to accommodate believers. The fame and reputation of people like Mary Ann Glendon, Stephen Carter, and Michael McConnell shows that being a serious Christian is no longer an automatic disability among law professors. The day may be coming when belief has as much status in academic culture as unbelief. . . .

William J. Stuntz
Charlottesville, VA

. . . I would like to make an effort to clarify why it is that there seems to be a contradiction in Robert Bork's general thesis regarding egalitarianism and the leftist politics of those in Hollywood. Since, as Mr. Bork points out, so much of the root of leftism is envy, why would those of such extreme possessions be so unitedly on the left? The answer is found in a study and understanding of theatrical artists. . . .

It is vital to understand, when it comes to artists, that they are most often damaged people. Born with great sensitivity, they suffered at a very young age in ways that others don't, often because they were "different." As a teacher of actors for years I found a disproportionate amount of child abuse of one form or another present in their early lives—broken homes, alcoholic parents, etc. The very act of acting is to escape into an imaginary world of one's own creation. Artists are obviously more comfortable in and yearn for a fantasy world, since early in their development the real world was recognized as too harsh to live in. . . .

The key element in the personalities of artists, theatrically speaking, is a sense of alienation from society. They just don't feel a part of things. . . . A conservative philosophy is rooted in the ability to face and accept the harsh realities of this world. It's why we have the joke that a neoconservative is a liberal who's been mugged. Those who are artists are just too sensitive, too vulnerable, have been hurt too deeply to be able to accept the reality of life, so they spend their lives creating another reality of their own, an imaginary one. This basic drive flows into their politics. They accept the fantasies of the left because those fantasies are easier to live with and seem to offer the hope of a better, fairer society one day. And being members of the left and proponents of this hope salves artists' consciences as they themselves, if successful, live like kings and queens. . . .

Robert Carnegie
North Hollywood, CA

The Fading of Positivist Belief

Contrary to a common misconception, science is not a monolithic enterprise committed to positivism. John J. Reilly ("After Darwin," June/July) is right on the mark in identifying the views of contemporary biologists such as Brian Goodwin as Platonic. In fact, from the time of the scientific revolution, biology has encompassed three major philosophical streams: Aristotelian, neo-Platonic, and mechanistic.

The Aristotelian approach held that organic structures must be understood according to built-in purposes (generally understood as divine purposes). Famous Aristotelians included Ray, Linnaeus, and Cuvier. But contemporary biologists are also giving Aristotle grudging credit; for example, Nobel prize-winner Max Delbruck delivered an address half-playfully entitled "How Aristotle Discovered DNA," arguing that the Aristotelian concept of Form is remarkably similar to the modern concept of a genetic program.

Brian Goodwin is a contemporary example of the neo-Platonist tradition, which emphasizes formative principles in living things and searches for fundamental anatomical patterns—"archetypes"—for each class of organism. Neo-Platonism blossomed in the eighth century as a reaction against the Newtonian world-machine of the Enlightenment, and was especially popular among embryologists, who sought an inner Law of Development to explain organic forms. (It is no accident that Goodwin is a developmental biologist.)

The mechanistic tradition began with Descartes, became radically reductionistic in the mid-nineteenth century, and achieved dominance in biology after Darwin proposed a completely materialistic mechanism for evolution. As historian Neal Gillespie argues, Darwin's intention was to promote a positivist epistemology limiting science to materialist explanations.

Today the neo-Darwinist mechanism for evolution (centered on mutation and natural selection) is being discredited—and with it, the positivist epistemology. As a result, the neo-Platonist tradition is becoming emboldened again, often encouraged by New Age spirituality (Goodwin's critics describe him as a New Age mystic); Aristotelianism is likewise making a comeback, particularly in creationist arguments for the validity of concepts such as purpose and design in biology.

Reilly seems worried about the sludge that might "bubble to the surface" as Enlightenment positivism cracks up. But I suggest that we are merely seeing a revival of the philosophical diversity that has always characterized biology. In the broad scope of history, the hegemony of positivism is a temporary aberration, a mere blip on the screen, already beginning to fade.

Nancy R. Pearcey
Annandale, VA

Juxtaposed Apologetics

The August/September issue contains an interesting juxtaposition of apologies, one for Protestantism (Peter J. Leithart, "Why Protestants Still Protest") and one for Roman

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Catholicism (John M. Haas, "Why Protestants Protest Too Much"). I found my heart left strangely cool by both pieces.

Mr. Leithart claims that *sola Scriptura* is an epistemological doctrine answering the question, From what source do I learn how I can commune with God? "*Sola Scriptura* means the Scriptures are Christ's unique revelation of the way of life; it means that Scripture alone, being the word of God, identifies where the living and life-giving Christ can be found." Now a Catholic might very well reply that of course the Scriptures are the source for our knowledge of God, but that, contrary to the belief of some Protestants, no text is self-interpreting. Thus the *sola* of *sola Scriptura* is epistemologically untenable, no matter where one stands in the hermeneutical wars of postmodernity. And since it is conceded by all that interpretation necessarily takes place within a context, why not the context of the Church's interpretation of Scripture through time?

Further, it is somewhat strange that after Luther and Barth Mr. Leithart should insist on the identity of Scriptures and Word of God. Biblically speaking, more than promising a written copy of the Word of God, Jesus promised his spirit to lead his followers into all truth.

Finally, Jesus "never promised to encounter them through icons or relics." Neither, however, did he promise to meet them in church on Sundays. These things develop, Mr. Leithart. The question is whether the aforementioned Spirit is behind the development.

Turning to Mr. Haas' apology, there is scarcely less to which to object. Whereas Mr. Leithart was not willing to admit of any legitimate development in Christianity, Mr. Haas is not willing to admit of any illegitimate development, provided that it occurs within the Roman church. Hence, his incredible statement that the growth of the superstitious search for and veneration of relics in the Middle Ages "*bordered* on excess and credulity." Not only Erasmus, but many other faithful Catholics prior to and during the Reformation showed that it was not only Luther who thought the border had been crossed in a major way.

More fundamentally for his position, Mr. Haas seems to found his veneration of the things Mr. Leithart despises on a strange Christological doctrine. "Catholics worship the Sacred Humanity of Christ that has redeemed them." This seems to be a strange kind of Nestorianism. Christ's "humanity" cannot be separated out and worshipped; He must be worshipped whole. Implications may be drawn from the Incarnation, but let us follow the Church Fathers as a model of critical reason and aesthetic good sense, and not use the Incarnation as an all-purpose justification for any kind of popular piety.

Finally for this side, Catholic biblicism is no more palatable than its Protestant relative. When, in Matthew 16, Jesus gives the power of "binding and loosing" to Peter, this refers not to the forgiveness of individual sins, but to the Pharisaic/rabbinic practice of making authoritative pronouncements about Halakhah. In John 20, Jesus gives the power to forgive sins not to Peter, but to all his disciples. So the attempt to find the fully developed papacy already in the words of the biblical Jesus fails, and all the more so in regard to the historical Jesus.

Any theology pleasing to God must be both evangelical *and* Catholic. It may not eschew critical, historical thought, for reason too is part of the Christian heritage. Dare I suggest that there may still be a place in the world for the Anglicanism of Hooker and Andrewes?

David Barrett-Johnson
Charlottesville, VA

Peter J. Leithart raises traditional Reformation complaints about Catholicism that still deserve reflection by Catholics. In a religion like Catholicism where expressions of piety are varied, the temptation to idolatry has always been strong. Pastor Leithart's argument that the teaching can't be applied correctly because error is at its root is not necessarily illogical; I just don't think it's the real story. The ex-Catholics I meet at work and play who have joined Protestant churches and "found Christ" are universally ignorant about the basics of the Catholic faith. Is the Catholic Church to blame for this? In many local cases, it is. Is it the teaching that leads to spiritual sloth and lassitude? Hardly. Catholics a generation or two ago who knew their Catholic faith and rejected it typically ended up becoming the village atheists. Departed Catholics today cannot give up what they've never had. If the Church was really doing its job of proclaiming the teachings of Christ in all its fullness from the pulpit maybe the Catholic Church wouldn't lose any marginal Catholics. . . .

David J. Lancaster
Riverside, CT

I could not believe the "denominational myopia" exhibited by Professor John M. Haas. His entire article betrayed a typical Roman Catholic bias: namely, to lump all Christians not in the Roman Catholic denomination into one camp and then to call them "Protestants." He betrays another myopic symptom by attributing to all non-Roman Catholics what may or may not be true of some. . . .

(The Rev.) R. R. Krueger
Christ Lutheran Church
Platte Woods, MO

John M. Haas replies:

Nestorianism, of course, held that there were two separate persons in Christ, one divine and the other human. Consequently, Nestorius was willing to attribute to Mary the title of "Mother of Christ," but not "Mother of God." The orthodox doctrine, affirmed at the Council of Chalcedon in 451 and seen in its declaration that Mary is indeed Mother of God, holds that Christ is a single person, at once God and man. Because the flesh of the Virgin was assumed by the Word, Christians do indeed worship the sacred humanity of Christ. It is the very reality of the hypostatic union which assures us that we worship the whole Christ, divinity and humanity. That was the very point of my argument. And

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from that reality flows the entire sacramental life of the Church. How Anglican of Mr. Barrett-Johnson to have misunderstood my argument because it appeared to offend "aesthetic" good sense. Further, in presenting his interpretation of Matthew 16 and John 20, he merely illustrates the Protestant dilemma of a lack of common faith and practice resulting from each Christian interpreting Scripture as he will in the absence of a divinely sanctioned interpreter, the Catholic Church. Finally, Mr. Barrett-Johnson pines for the Anglicanism of Hooker and Andrewes. Well he might. Would that there were still a place in the world where it could be found!

Pastor Krueger is correct that it is impossible to attribute the same beliefs and practices to all Protestants. But there must be some common characteristics. Otherwise we simply could not speak of Protestantism at all. One common characteristic, exhibited admittedly to varying degrees in the range from Mennonite to Anglican, is the rejection of the belief that the redemption won for us in the Incarnation must now be appropriated through the sacraments as the extension of the Incarnation through time and space.

Engendering Paranoia?

As a non-Catholic subscriber, I object strongly to the advertisement for the *New Oxford Review* in the June/July issue.

The question headlined in the advertisement—"Why Is the Catholic Church So Hated?"—seems to me to engender paranoia in those who accept the premise of the question. Is the *New Oxford Review* so desperate for subscribers that it must use such language? . . .

James L. Sanders
Flagstaff, AZ

"Almost" Believed?

I heartily agree with J. Bottum's opinion that T. S. Eliot's religious verse can be less than satisfactory as a handbook of the Christian spiritual journey ("What T. S. Eliot Almost Believed," August/September). . . . I agree with Mr. Bottum that the "red flags" are sometimes written into the work itself: there is definitely the "detachment," there is the tendency to use the subjunctive, and there is the superciliousness and the curious need to be "difficult." . . .

But if we are to debate the character and quality of Eliot's Christianity, we should not ascribe so much power to the human mind that we would (for example) believe ourselves capable of knowing whether a professing Christian possessed *real* faith. Of course, if we were to enter into such a hopeless speculation, we have in Eliot's case much more to go on than his poetry and prose, much of which was never intended to be personal or confessional. Eliot's is a well-documented life. We observe a brilliant man who had doubted and was searching for the meaning of it all. . . . We learn of a person who struggled with depression, felt deeply the harrowing of hell, was guilt-ridden and hopeless. And we know that this same man at last publicly turned to Jesus Christ as his only salvation.

Those who knew him attest that Eliot was an unusual duck and therefore was an unusual Christian; but he was considered by most to be a devout and *faithful* Christian. . . .

But Mr. Bottum's article, in spite of its cleverness and insight, is finally confusing in terms of its own spiritual perspective. The fundamental issue in any discussion of T. S. Eliot's spirituality is whether the human intellect (in spite of what may happen to it in the event) participates in the ultimate experience of the human person, the Vision of God or whatever one would call it: Eliot believed the intellect does participate in this event. In this he was standing in a long and venerable tradition within the Church. . . .

Eliot was an artist, and a person's art should be judged by what a person was setting out to accomplish and not by what the reader thinks an allegedly Christian poem or poetry *ought* to "say" or be. And Eliot was a *Modernist* poet: We do not enjoy *The Waste Land* the way we enjoy Wordsworth's *Ode* on immortality, and we are put off by many of Eliot's idiosyncrasies, but we still believe *The Waste Land* to be one of the greatest Modernist poems. When we get to *Four Quartets* we are still dealing with art, we are still studying a Modernist work of art, and we are handling a poem of awesome complexity and even (perhaps) confusion: but we are not reading a work of mystical theology. The artist renders life in his or her own way; and I think we are justified who believe that Eliot the artist was successful with *Four Quartets.*

I can't help but wonder if Mr. Bottum wrote his Eliot article as one who has been disillusioned. Perhaps he was one who was once taken in by the beauty and mystery of Eliot's poetry, asked from the poems a spiritual guidance they cannot possibly give, and, finally outgrowing the very unique mysticism he found there, was put down hard and made a little angry by the experience. But I can't possibly know if this is the case. I do know that many Christians have come a long way since we expected Eliot to get us closer to Heaven; yet he remains a magnificent poet, our brother in Christ, and in many ways an inspiration. . . .

(The Rev.) W. L. Prehn
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This Time

For All the Saints

James Nuechterlein

We all know, from an early age, that we are going to die. But that abstract knowledge truly becomes our own only much later. Sometimes it comes as a gradually developing awareness, sometimes more suddenly.

It came late for me—during my fortieth year. I had known for some time of my father's cancer, known indeed that it was incurable. So my sister's late-night call, relating the doctor's report that the end would come any time now, came as no surprise. Yet on returning to bed I was suddenly seized by blank terror; for perhaps ten minutes I trembled in abject fear. My father's sentence had somehow become my own. At that moment theoretical knowledge became dread reality: as surely as my father, I was going to die.

The moment passed, and the terror—at least in that extreme form—has not returned. But the knowledge remains. It's always there in the background, and it manifests itself in ways large and small. I have always enjoyed good health, and have never had much tendency to hypochondria. Lately, though, I dwell on any ache or bruise out of the ordinary, and my imagination occasionally takes morbid turns that catch me by surprise. I am aware of diminishing time, of the sum of my life, of many things left undone.

And I have become a compulsive reader of the obituary page. I read it first of all as an actuary. My day is set up, one way or the other, by the median age of those who have died. A day that features those in their eighties or nineties is most satisfactory. This morning, for example—a slow death day—the three whose notices appeared in the *New York Times* were ninety-three, eighty-one, and ninety-six. Full, rich lives (their contents, to tell the truth, quite aside). The seventies are all right, though a little premature. Those in their sixties seem cut off in their prime, and those at or below (to pick a not quite random number) age fifty-eight have been deprived of their youth. Anything below that is the slaughter of the innocents.

There is also, of course, the substance of those lives. Most of those who make the *Times* have led lives of some note. Not all household names, by any means, but people of accomplishment. They have built, managed, created, discovered, written, preached, healed, invented, composed, advocated, sold, performed, taught.

There are, though, oddities of various kinds—an actress known best, indeed mainly, for asking "Where's the beef?", a football player who ran eighty yards the wrong way, a politician who lost to Harold Stassen. Then there are those defined by negatives or failure—someone implicated, for example, in the Watergate scandal. Or lives defined by victim status, as in one of those blacklisted during the 1950s.

It all seems, in the end, a sort of lottery, remembrance by random selection. And even those who inarguably achieved: What finally is left? Their lives lived long or short, they are as dead—and most of them as forgotten—as all the rest. Vanity of vanities, says the preacher, surveying a few column inches in the back of the *Times*.

To all of which, people of faith must respond, yes and no. The cover date for this issue is November, at the beginning of which the church celebrates All Saints Day. It is for me, next to Christmas and Easter, the most important date on the church's calendar. It insists on our anonymity in that it reminds us how insignificant has been our part in the great drama of the church through the ages. It rescues us from our anonymity in that it tells us that we nonetheless participate—enrolled as we are in that great cloud of witnesses—in the story that, for Christians, constitutes the meaning of human history.

Most days, and certainly most moments of most days, that all seems too grandiose. The quotidian lacks grandeur—which is precisely the point of Christian worship. It reconnects us, in quotidian observance, with the great meta-story that remains true even when everything conspires to make us believe it too good—at any rate, too bizarre—to be true. The liturgy makes sense of what is otherwise, quite literally, one damned thing after another. And it reminds us that redeemed lives ought to look that way.

I am drawn to All Saints Day in part, I suspect, for the same reason that I am drawn to funerals. They both keep Christian proclamation honest; they both make it hard to fudge the meaning of the faith. We've all heard Easter sermons that expatiate vaguely on the possibilities of new life, however imagined or construed—thereby reducing the faith to an empty metaphor. Christmas, for its part, is all too easily dissolved in sentimental recollections of childhood yearnings: yes, Virginia, there is a Christ-child.

But on All Saints Day, as at funerals, we confront death. And even agnostic clerics find it difficult to make of death a very persuasive metaphorical opportunity. It recalls us, if we are honest, either to orthodoxy or to an empty silence. One can understand those whose rationalist dogma requires

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them, in the face of death, to refuse faith's consolations. One can only pity those whose only available option is desperately to try to change the subject.

And for those who count themselves, however waveringly, as believers, All Saints Day reaffirms that they will be remembered, in a record far more durable than that provided by the *Times,* not for who but for Whose they are. FT

And Were the Damned Glad?

—and when he'd breathed his last, Jesus
bounded down to hell.

They thought they'd known the worst,
stewing and burning alone in the outer darkness—

Still, they'd been secure in their fate,
its familiar misery snug as a nest.

He entered this,
not cruising the rim like a tourist,
sorry but separate
—dropped straight

into their deadness instead
with his oozing sores, and relentlessly

loved them there—each wretch in each foulness—
that was torment.

And it seemed to the damned an eternity
before he left, tearing a hole in the seal

between hell and sky as he rose,
and the hole remained—

Donna Henderson

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Opinion

The Do-It-Yourself Guide to Theological Erudition

Younger scholars may find themselves intimidated by the learning ostentatiously on display at meetings of the American Academy of Religion, Catholic Theological Association, and other conferences of academic theologians. This guide was reportedly prepared by the dean of a major divinity school to help junior faculty who are making their debut at gatherings of the guild. An item chosen from the first column and matched with any items from the following three results in an observation that is guaranteed to mark the speaker as a person to be reckoned with.

Column A	Column B	Column C	Column D
1. A formal analysis will quickly show that	1. the meaning of major elements	1. is further compounded by considering	1. the relevant dynamics of Luke-Acts.
2. From an exegetical point of view	2. the linguistic consideration	2. imposes smothering constraints upon	2. the ramifications of consensus-building.
3. Although Moltmann does not state it in so many words, the implication is clear that	3. a structural dynamic analysis	3. necessitates that urgent consideration be made of	3. the clarity of the sociological dimensions.
4. There can be no doubt that	4. the eschatological structure	4. adds considerable urgency to	4. the unfortunate faux pas of neo-orthodoxy.
5. Based upon interdisciplinary considerations	5. the homiletic problem	5. calls into question	5. any attempt to introduce historical analysis.
6. In the last analysis	6. a liturgical perspective	6. must give way to	6. an emphasis on dogmatics.
7. From a strictly theological viewpoint	7. the introduction of gnosticism	7. orients the serious scholar toward	7. undue reliance on derivative materials.
8. Most scholars seem to have forgotten that	8. the underlying question	8. provokes an examination of	8. global perspectives.
9. Under the guise of liberalism	9. an ahistorical stance	9. tends toward	9. excessive use of the nineteenth-century frameworks.
10. One might say	10. a need to master the data	10. drives us to consider	10. a soteriological point of view.

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Defending Diversity

Gilbert Meilaender

Every spring a few of the better high school juniors in Ohio compete in the Ohio Tests of Scholastic Achievement. I imagine something similar happens in many other states. Although I pay attention to such matters only from a considerable distance, I was intrigued to learn about one feature of the English test given to the juniors this year.

The test covers the standard things one might anticipate: spelling, grammar and syntax, reading comprehension. But this year there was an interesting twist to one section of the test in which students are asked to identify mistakes and infelicities of expression. Along with identifying grammatical errors, they were required to find and identify instances of sexist language. Thus they found themselves asked to ponder whether, for example, it would be appropriate to refer in a sentence to T. S. Eliot as a poet and Emily Dickinson as a poetess.

I wouldn't myself know what to say about such a question other than, perhaps, "do whatever you like." One suspects, however, that the education professionals who constructed the test had no such laissez-faire attitude in mind. On such matters, even in a postmodern world in which readers may construct a text any way they wish, I'm confident the education pros believe they know the Truth. Diversity of expression—not to mention thought—is not as high on their scale of values as they like to imagine. Indeed, it is disconcerting to think that these are the folk to whom we entrust the task of broadening and enriching the minds of the next generation. And, of course, it helps one to understand why the papers submitted for college courses so often read as they do—full of convoluted "himself or herself" expressions.

While I was in this mood, contemplating the vagaries of our commitment to diversity, I noted an article in our student newspaper. Entitled "Religion Faces Student Hostility," the article recounted concerns of believing students about the attitude of many other students toward religion. Catholic students complain that they are seen as "agents of the Pope." A Jewish student comments that the campus is "only tolerant if you fit into the chosen few who deserve to be tolerated." There are reports of flyers posted listing stereotypes attributed to Muslims and Arabs. Evangelical Christians note how hard it is to express their beliefs when the immediately surrounding culture assumes that an intelligent person would not be Christian.

Such a climate of opinion had also been observed by others, and one senior administrator noted, "I've been distressed by the willingness of some people to make pretty prejudicial comments about religion. That seems, to me, to run directly against a celebration of diversity." Such a statement, spoken surely with all the good will in the world, is useful. It allows a place for religious belief—as well as other potentially unpopular ideas—to survive. But it also invites our reflection. It is striking to reflect upon our need to defend religion in the name of diversity, the reigning value of academic communities in our day.

How well is religion served by such a defense? Well enough, perhaps, as long as we can rely on the character and genuine good will of those committed to diversity, but in the long run this may not be sufficient. To defend religion on this ground, helpful as it may be, will also miss important elements of religious belief. For one thing, such a defense takes the passion and purpose out of religion. It becomes a way of life to which a few people may be drawn—fine if that's your thing, fine to ignore as well. How could such an attitude exist on a campus where, in fact, quite a few students major in religion and many more take courses in it? Perhaps, I have often reflected, our students are drawn to the study of religion because it seems to offer the big picture, a "handle on the cosmos." But they would be very disappointed indeed were they to discover that this big picture committed them to anything in particular. Defending religious belief as a form of diversity misses the intense particularity of such commitment.

Such a defense also overlooks the fact that the value of diversity in our culture is itself the product of a long, laborious development in which religion has played a major role. Nor has that role been confined to wars of religion in which we wore ourselves out until, finally exhausted, we were forced to settle for tolerance. Its role has been far more positive than that. It is precisely because every individual is equidistant from God that each must be cherished. It is precisely because faith must finally take root in the heart that it ought not be required or coerced. It is precisely as a possible companion in future beatitude that each person ought to be loved. Thus, C. S. Lewis once wrote:

> Each of the redeemed shall forever know and praise some one aspect of the divine beauty better than any other creature can. Why else were individuals created, but that God, loving all infinitely, should love each differently? . . . If all experienced God in the same way and returned Him an identical worship, the song of the church triumphant would have no symphony; it would be like an orchestra in which all the instruments played the same note. . . . Heaven is a city, and a body, because the blessed remain

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> eternally different. . . . For doubtless the continually successful, yet never completed, attempt by each soul to communicate its vision to all others . . . is also among the ends for which the individual was created.

This image gives a transcendent ground to our invocations and affirmations of diversity. But it does not invite a flaccid relativism which supposes that it is just fine to want to play in this symphony while constantly striking wrong notes. The image is grounded not in a commitment to individual diversity but in love for what is true and good—in which all that is important about us as individuals will be preserved. Indeed, Lewis shows us what a celebration of diversity—if it is really to be festive—must involve. If, by contrast, our commitment to diversity is grounded only in the individualism of self-expression, it will eventually prove unreliable. It will provide an acceptable cover for asserting our own view, though always in the name of diversity, never in the name of truth.

And then others will have to devote their energies to determining whether we commit any grave wrong by referring to Emily Dickinson as a poetess.

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Getting Real About Christian-Muslim Dialogue

C. M. Naim

A while back I had occasion to sit in the audience at two Christian-Muslim dialogues in Chicago and to attend a pair of similar sessions at the "Parliament of World Religions." The sponsors on each occasion were different, as were the speakers; but what was said was alarmingly similar.

Interfaith dialogues, until recently, typically occurred only between Christians and Jews. And their urgency derived from the impact of the Holocaust upon the Christian conscience, with the horror of the realization that what had happened to the Jews of Europe was partially a consequence of a long-entrenched anti-Semitism among too many Christians. Such dialogues tended to be between those who saw themselves as victims of unspeakable crimes and those who saw themselves, in some sense, as parties to the crimes. Surprisingly, the same modes of thought seemed to govern the Christian-Muslim dialogues that I witnessed.

The Christians usually began by denouncing the Crusades, the eighteenth- and nineteenth-century colonial expansions into Islamic lands, and the more recent Cold War policies of the United States against various nationalist movements in the "Third World." They readily identified themselves with "the West" and its history, only to castigate all Western protagonists and proponents, past and present. Their Muslim counterparts began in the same vein. They denounced the Crusades and argued that the same crusading spirit worked equally behind the colonial expansion and American support of Israel against the Palestinians. These were the crucial moments, they argued, when the "West" (Christianity) encountered the "East" (Islam) and behaved shamefully. The listeners nodded in agreement. One Muslim speaker mentioned the expulsion of the Moors from Spain as another such moment, and all heads were further lowered in sorrow and shame.

Amazingly, no one asked how the Moors arrived in Spain in the first place, or what had brought Muslims to the land of the Testaments. It was as if there had been no imperial expansion of Islam, no Arab conquests of Syria, North Africa, and Spain. I'm not denying the horrors of the *Reconquista* and the Crusades. I merely wish to point out the absurdity of denying any agency to the Muslims themselves. Islamic history unfolded as a series of conquests. This is not to say that Islam spread only by the sword or that Christians and Muslims should argue over who shed less blood. It is simply to acknowledge that the sword was very much present in the story of Islam's expansion, too.

When this acknowledgment is not made, interfaith dialogue soon turns into an incoherent comparison of Islam, a faith without history, and Christianity, a history without faith. More, the inordinate emphasis in such dialogues on the scriptural and juristic aspects of religion, with the simultaneous neglect of the experiential and salvific, turns the two faiths into two ideologies, of which one seemed to control all of history while the other appeared to have no agency at all—one standing for a body of aggressors, the other for a cohort of victims. By the same token, the dialogues manage to suppress the plurality of Islam—its many regional forms, the differing ways it adapted itself to local conditions and traditions. A rich and variegated religion is presented in such dialogues as a homogenous, featureless whole.

There is such a thing as Islam, of course, and there are many Islams as well. There is one Islam in the sense that there is one revealed book and one Prophet to whom it was revealed. There are many Islams in the sense that there are many different traditions of interpreting that book and understanding that Prophet. The lived Islam of a peasant in Bangladesh

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is similar to but not identical with that of his counterpart in Algeria, as is the Islam of a middle-class professional in Karachi and his counterpart in Indonesia. In each instance, the differences as well as the similarities are greatly cherished. These differences, however, found no mention in the dialogues I witnessed. They were not present in the remarks of the Muslims and formed no part of the understanding that the Christians sought.

This elision of Islamic differences has dangers not merely for the Christians engaged in dialogue, but for the Muslims as well. The Christians never scrutinized a repeated Muslim claim that what made Islam unique was that it was a totality, a complete system that covered each and every aspect of human life. That such a claim has a dangerous edge went unnoticed. Both for Muslims in self-proclaimed Islamic countries and for Muslims in such non-Islamic nations as India, Islam was said to be a total religion—which easily transposes into the demand that every Muslim be a total Muslim, a Muslim entirely in terms of the person making that demand. Any suggestion of diversity, any opposition to that proclaimed totality then becomes ruthlessly punishable. It takes very little to turn a dream of totality into a totalitarian nightmare.

These lapses, I believe, happened because the Christians engaged in the dialogues neglected to remember their own struggle to allow the existence of a plurality of Christian sects. That didn't happen overnight; it took centuries and cost much innocent blood. A structurally stable peace of this kind has not yet come about in the world of Islam. Ecumenism is not a familiar term among Muslim theologians and mosque leaders. That does not mean that diverse, ordinary Muslims have not lived in peace with each other. They have. But it has been an uneasy peace that unscrupulous religious leaders are able to destroy only too easily, as they have, for example, in Pakistan.

The interfaith dialogues I witnessed took place in America, within the dynamics of a secular polity. And yet the protagonists in these dialogues displayed a curious and selective ambivalence toward that polity. One only heard that secularism is good for America but not for Pakistan or Egypt, because Pakistan and Egypt are Muslim countries with majorities and Muslims are required by their religion to establish an Islamic state. But what of those Muslims in Pakistan, Egypt, Algeria, Sudan, Iran, Malaysia, Bangladesh, Afghanistan—all over the world—who would rather live within a polity that allows every religion—and every sect within a religion—to freely pursue matters of faith within a context of equality and reciprocity? Are they not good enough Muslims, even in the eyes of American Christians?

The Christians who initiated these dialogues may have gained some understanding of contemporary Islamic politics. But if their aim was to gain an insight into lived Islamic religion, they should have brought to these dialogues their own lived religion. At none of the meetings that I attended did the Christians raise any real issues of religious faith.

The Muslims were not inclined to raise such issues either. And when they did, it was only to dismiss them with a scriptural quotation. For the overwhelming part, they used these occasions as opportunities to tell their story of grievances and hurts, placing their remarks precisely and entirely in recent history—in a narrative of defeat and loss, neglect, denial, and victimhood.

The Muslim narrative of hurts not only posits an immediate colonial past of utter decline and passivity but also implies a pre-colonial past of pristine Islamic glory. Both descriptions are not merely false, but also harmful; invoking them only distorts any effort to think through our shared future. A selective memory of caliphs and kings cannot help us much in working towards a world that is not just pluralistic but also democratic.

The goal of an interfaith dialogue between Christians and Muslims should certainly not be the position taken in the Qur'anic verse invoked by one Muslim: "To you your way, to me mine." That verse is explicitly addressed to *kafirs*, "the Unbelievers." Christians are not *kafirs*, perhaps not even in the sight of the most absolutist Muslim. More, in its full context, the verse is a statement of an absolute parting of ways, which, of course, cannot be the aim of any dialogue—any more than a dialogue can be for the sake of a victory for one of the participants. But neither should some compromise or syncretism be the goal. The only dialogues that we should deem fruitful must either clarify something that was obscure in our own thought, or at least make a little bit opaque what we earlier thought patently clear.

Judaism and Christianity are religions explicitly affirmed in the Qur'an, but the Qur'an equally explicitly commands Muslims to "judge between [Christians and Jews] in the light of what has been revealed by God, and do not follow their whims, and beware of them lest they lead you away from the guidance sent down to you by God"—which would seem to rule out any kind of dialogue. The Qur'an, however, elsewhere seems to invite dialogue when it enjoins Muslims to say to Christians and Jews, "O people of the Book, let us come to an agreement on that which is common between us, that we worship no one but God, and make none His compeer, and that none of us take any others for lord apart from God." The Qur'an also clearly places Muslims, Christians, and Jews on an equal footing to the extent they are capable of performing deeds that are good in the sight of God. "To each of you We have given a law and a way and a pattern of life. If God had pleased He could surely have made you one people (professing one

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faith). But He wished to try and test you by that which He gave you. So try to excel in good deeds. To Him will you all return in the end, when He will tell you of what you were at variance."

How we can differently worship one God; what makes a given deed good or bad; how these critical issues play out in the lives of ordinary Muslims, Christians, and Jews, at different times and in different places—some understanding of these matters is the worthy goal of any interfaith dialogue. It is by no means an easy goal. But we may hope to get somewhere close to it if we—Christians and Muslims—pursue that goal in the spirit Wolfhart Pannenberg advised (quoting 1 Corinthians 13:9-12): "While the truth of God's revelation is indeed ultimate, our understanding of that truth is always provisional and will remain so until the end of history."

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To Be Conservative in Ireland: A Lament

David Quinn

The Irish have the dreadful habit of keeping about thirty years behind the times. This being so, Ireland is a blessed place to be in the 1990s if you happen to be a 1960s-style liberal. The "long march through the institutions," completed in the United States years ago, has just begun to gather steam here in the Emerald Isle. But for a conservative, Ireland is a thoroughly depressing place to be at present, and I look across the Atlantic to America with more than a hint of envy.

Why do I feel envious when I cast an eye across the Atlantic? Let me put it this way. How would you enjoy finding yourself transported back to 1965, realizing that it is going to be years and years before all the silliness and political correctness finally lose their steam?

I know America is only now (hopefully) breaking free from that sixties liberalism, but in Ireland there is no major political party that even remotely resembles the American Republican party. Our media are split between the politically indifferent and the politically correct. There is no *Wall Street Journal*, no *National Review*, no FIRST THINGS, no *Crisis*, no *New Criterion*, no conservative platform of consequence whatsoever. And to add to our woes, the influence of the Catholic Church is in precipitous decline.

This might surprise those who still harbor a romantic image of Ireland as the Land of Saints and Scholars. If it ever was, it isn't now. Romantic Ireland's dead and gone.

Catholicism still remains the religion of over 95 percent of the populace, of course, and something like 76 percent still go to Mass each week, but nominalism is widespread and the so-called "ethic of personal autonomy" is in the ascendancy. That this should be so is perhaps not so surprising. Irish Catholicism, while in its strength, was often thought to rule too harshly. Tales of overbearing priests are by now well and truly part of Irish folklore. But after World War II, Irish Catholicism's power began to weaken under the combined blows of more widespread education, growing prosperity, and increased exposure to the "sinful" ways of the rest of the world. People began to rebel against the old "authoritarian" ways.

When Vatican II opened the doors of the Church somewhat, the young intelligentsia couldn't flee fast enough. Mostly in their twenties and thirties, and filled with an overpowering desire to cut the whole of Irish society loose from the "dead hand" of the Church, they came to occupy, in the decades that followed, almost all of the key positions in the media, politics, and the academy. With the generation that preceded them now largely retired, their dominance is total and unchallenged.

While this story will strike many as familiar—it has surely happened all across the Western world—what makes Ireland different is not only the lateness of the revolution but also the extent of the victory. It is not just that liberals have won the culture war or that the opposition has been pushed to the margins; conservatism in Ireland has been virtually exterminated. Irish conservatism today, with a few notable exceptions, consists merely of bona fide cranks and sad, elderly people mourning the loss of all their ancient world. The Church itself seems to feel helpless before the changes. It is astonishing, really, to reflect upon the fragility of Irish conservatism. When the assault began, it collapsed like a cathedral of sand.

Future historians will have a grand time writing books analyzing why this was so. For my own part I believe Irish conservatism was uniquely vulnerable to the changes of modernity. Irish Catholicism was too powerful, too massive—so massive that it displaced all other forms of conservatism. Although for several decades after the foundation of the State in 1922 all of the main parties reflected the conservatism of the

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wider society, none was convinced of conservatism: they were conservative more by convention than by conviction.

With the Catholic Church as the bulwark of conservatism, no one felt obliged to establish a conservative party such as the American Republicans or the British Conservatives, and no conservative tradition independent of Catholicism developed in Ireland. There was thus nothing to fall back on when Catholicism itself came under attack. There is a hint of irony here, for Ireland is after all the home of the father of modern conservatism, Edmund Burke. He left no discernible impression, however, and his chief Irish interpreter, Conor Cruise O'Brien, is a liberal.

The task of conservatives in Ireland today is to found a new conservative tradition from scratch. It will have to be a creation ex nihilo, and it will be made doubly difficult by the fact that anything even remotely conservative is instantly dismissed by the liberals as being of a kind either with the old-fashioned Catholicism they so fervently despise or with the Thatcherism discredited by its checkered response to the "Irish Question."

The irony is, of course, that the very people who so pride themselves on having thrown off the "yoke" of the Church are busy constructing a new yoke for us. These Artisans of a New Ireland seem unaware of what Americans have already discovered—that as mediating structures such as the Church retreat, the State automatically rushes in to fill the vacuum.

But not only is the State growing by default, it is also growing by design. Large sectors of the economy are already tied to the State and hundreds of thousands of people are dependent upon it. It has a monopolistic position in the TV market and it is in the process of taking over the education system from the Church. This last is painfully ironic: in the name of pluralism, education is simply passing from one monopoly (the Church) to another (the State).

Ireland has a history of political domination by Britain on the one hand, and moral domination by the Church on the other. Such a history does not breed a culture of self-reliance. Dependency comes naturally to us. The theological correctness of the past has been superseded by today's (entirely secular) political correctness. Thus, while the watchdogs of the old guard find it very difficult to have lewd advertisements removed from public places, the new sexual watchdogs of Ireland's powerful feminist lobby rarely have such difficulty. They are taken very seriously indeed by the same liberals who have no time for what they dismiss as Catholic prudery.

Make no mistake. Ireland is still an extremely civil, warm, and friendly society. But the Irish cultural terrain today inevitably reminds one of 1960s America, in which a group of liberals—declaring themselves liberated from what they insisted was an oppressive, old-fashioned order—set out to destroy all the existing culture and impose the power of the "enlightened" state. It is sad to consider that we Irish must relive America's sixties, seventies, and eighties before we arrive at our own conservative movement, thirty years hence.

David Quinn, *a native of Dublin, is a new contributor to* First Things. *He is a columnist and feature writer with the* Sunday Business Post *as well as editorial writer for the* Irish Catholic, *a weekly newspaper.*

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What's Your Name?

Amy A. Kass and Leon R. Kass

The authors of this essay on names have just identified themselves. Well, not quite. For the sake of full disclosure, they are willing to have it known that they have the same last name not by coincidence or consanguinity but because they are married to each other (and have been for over thirty-four years). Some will suspect that this biographical fact is responsible for the authors' attitudes toward names and naming. The authors respectfully submit that the reverse is closer to the truth, that their attitude toward names and naming—and the many things that they have slowly come to understand about what names imply—is responsible for this paramount biographical fact. This essay is a first attempt to articulate, not least for themselves, what they have tacitly understood.

I

Everybody has a name. Nearly everybody who has a name knows what it is. Our name is as familiar and as close to us as our own skin; indeed, we are more frequently aware of our name than we are of the unique living body that it identifies. We write it, speak it, answer to it—often, immediately, surely, unreflectively. We generally take our name for granted. But, for these reasons, in a deeper sense we may not really know our name—what it means, why we have it, how it should be regarded and used. Paradoxically, by dint of being so familiar, the manifest mystery of our named identity may have become invisible to us. We name ourselves and others, but do we really know what we are doing when we do so?

To name is to identify. But what this means depends on the meaning of names, the meaning of identity, and the relation between the name and the thing named. Most common names, unlike personal names, are merely pointers, holding no deeper meanings for the named. A rose by any other name would surely smell as sweet. The lion were he called a lamb would still be king of beasts. And human beings, whether known as *anthropoi, viri, beney adam,* or *menschen,* remain unalterably rational, animal, and just as mortal. Like the names that Adam gave the animals, these names designate but do not determine the thing. They are merely conventional handles for grasping the beings handled, which, because they are already naturally distinct and distinctive, beg only to be recognized with names peculiarly their own. In naming beings distinctively we do little more than acknowledge the articulated and multiform character of the given world.

Not all acts of naming are so innocent. Sometimes they actually shape and form the things they name. Such creative naming is, for example, especially characteristic of the biblical God, Who, in the account of creation given in the first chapter of Genesis, names five things: light, darkness, the firmament, the dry land, and the gathered waters. As Robert Sacks observes,

> We can best grasp the significance of naming by comparing the things God named with the names God gives them. Light was called day, darkness was called night. The firmament was called heaven, the dry place was called land, the water was called sea. Darkness is not light, water is not dry. What more does a name add? The Hebrew word translated "firmament" which God called heaven comes from the root meaning "to beat." Workmen pound copper until it spreads out into a thin amorphous

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> sheet, then form it and cut it and give it shape. Light and darkness, wet and dry, like the thinly pounded sheet of copper, seem to be an indefinite morass, each having its own quality, but each spreading out beyond the human imagination. But the day ends when night comes and the seas end at the shoreline, and the firmament becomes a whole when it becomes the sky. Without names, there would still be distinctions. There would be love and there would be hate, but bravery would shade off into foolhardiness, and we would lose the clarity of thought.

God's naming clarifies, delimits, bounds, shapes, and makes intelligible. Like the creation itself, which proceeds by acts of speech (which are in turn always acts embodying and producing *separations*), these acts of naming bring order to chaos, the discrete to the continuous, definition to the indefinite, shapely and recognizable form to the merely qualitative.

Human naming, though perforce an act of speech and hence of reason, is, however, frequently colored by human passions such as fear, pride, hope, and lust. The names Adam gave the animals may have been disinterested, but not so the names he gives to himself and to the woman when she is brought before him: "This now is bone of my bone and flesh of my flesh; and this shall be called woman (*ishah*) because she was taken out of man (*ish*)." Previously called (by God and by the narrator) *adam*, human being (*adam* is not a personal name but a species name), the man now names himself "male human being," *ish*, in relation to "female human being," *ishah*. It is her (naked) appearance before him ("*before* him" both literally and lexically, in his quoted speech) that makes him feel his maleness; the carnal remark, "bone of my bone, flesh of my flesh," strikes us as the verbalization of sexual desire; the man looks upon the woman as if she were his missing half, to which he now feels powerfully drawn in a desire for fusion. At the very least, one must admit that his delight in her leads him to exaggerate the degree to which she is "his own," more same than other, and to see her as an exteriorized portion of himself. This is not the voice of pure reason naming; and the name, born of his desire, has consequences for their relationship.

Later, a different passion will lead the man to rename the woman, this time without reference to himself. Hearing in God's grim prophecy of the dismal human future (sorrow, sweat, toil, and death) the only good news, namely, that the woman will bear children, he grasps at this straw of hope, renaming the woman Eve (*Chavah*) because she is the mother of all living (*chai*). From Adam's hopefulness Eve gets the first genuinely proper name given in the Bible.

What, then, is the case with our proper names, our personal names, the names we carry throughout our lives? Are they merely arbitrary and conventional handles that serve simply to designate and uniquely pick us out of a crowd? Or do our names, like those given by God, have power to shape our lives? Which passions do and should govern acts of naming: when we name, do we express desires for ourselves (*ishah*) or hopes for the future of others (*Chavah*)? Is it a matter of substantial indifference what we are called, what we call ourselves, or what we call others?

As we do not (generally) name ourselves, we normally do not encounter these questions in our daily lives. True, as Americans, sharing in the English common law of names, we have the right freely to change our names, as often as we please, and not a few young people take advantage of this privilege. But it rarely even occurs to most of us that we could change our names; we accept without question what we have been given and we unthinkingly regard changing our given name as like violating a sacred order. But this seemingly "given" order of names is, in fact, the product of conscious human choice. Thus, all the questions about the meaning of naming clearly do confront us, at least implicitly, when we name our children.

The first gift of parents to a child, after the gift of life itself, is its name. Like the given life it names, the given name is a gift for a lifetime—indeed, for more than a lifetime; when we are gone, our name carved in stone and the memories it evokes will be, for nearly all of us, all that remains. Here is a gift that is not only permanent but possibly life-shaping. Here is a gift that cannot be refused; here is a gift that cannot easily be put aside; here is a gift that must be worn and that straightway not only marks but constitutes one's identity.

On what basis does one select a gift, especially a gift of such importance? Generally speaking, one gives gifts that one thinks someone will like and appreciate, or one gives gifts that one thinks will be fitting and suitable, or one gives gifts that one thinks will be helpful and good. But in the gift of a name, even more than with other gifts to the newborn (as clothing or toys), one has no idea whatsoever which name will prove likable, which name will prove suitable, which name will be helpful to the human being who, at the time of naming, is virtually unknown and unknowable, and largely pure potentiality. The awesome mystery of individuated human life announces itself in this nameless and unknowable stranger, who must nonetheless be called by a proper name. Faced with our invincible ignorance, we parents are forced to consult our own thoughts and feelings, though, it is to be hoped, without in the least forgetting the future welfare of our child. Though we necessarily will be moved by what pleases or suits or inspires us, we do well when we remember that it is the child who must live with and live out the identity we thus confer upon him or her.

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II

Some of the considerations that might reasonably enter into choosing a name are obvious. Parents will want a name that, in conjunction with the family name, is euphonic, or, at least will not sound bad (the authors rejected on this basis their first-choice name for a daughter, Rebekah Kass: too many "ka"s). Parents will avoid names that could easily become the object of ridicule (for example, the authors would never have named a son Jack) or that would in other ways be likely to be burdensome to or resented by a typical child. Here parents will no doubt be guided both by their imaginations and by their own experience: they will surely remember the miseries inflicted by cruel or insensitive peers on one or another of their childhood acquaintances who had been saddled with a name too unusual, too pretentious, too quaint, too prissy, too foreign, or too stained by one of its disgraceful namesakes. Some parents, to avoid the dangers that befall those who stand out, especially among the conformist young, may well refrain from giving a name that is utterly without precedent—for it may not find in the child that gets it the strength to stand alone and apart. On the other hand, some parents, seeking to avoid the commonplace, may opt for something out of the ordinary, a name with charm or class or appealing novelty, implying thereby the wish to help the child gain distinction. In such matters, different parental choices will no doubt reflect reasonably differing parental attitudes toward the balance between standing out and standing within, between distinction and inclusion, between risk and safety.

Parents who give the matter some thought will try to choose a name that wears well not only during childhood but, even more, also during adulthood; for we bear our names much longer as adults than as children. Some names that are cute when worn in infancy or childhood seem ridiculous when attached to mature—or elderly—men and women. Connected with this matter of fitness are also considerations of likely nicknames and diminutives, both those to be given at home and those likely to be acquired at school or at play. One feels for the little fellow in postwar Shaker Heights whose pretentious, upwardly mobile Jewish parents named him Lancelot, and even more because they could not refrain from calling him by the affectionate (and standard) diminutive—which resounded through the streets when they called him in from play—"Lancelotkele." ("Latkele," gentle reader, is Yiddish for a small potato pancake, eaten traditionally at Hanukkah).

But these considerations are largely negative and serve mainly to prevent mistakes. They do not guide the positive choice. How then do we choose?

Whether we know it or not, the way we approach this serious, indeed awesome, task speaks volumes about our basic attitudes not only toward our children but also toward life. For we can name, just as we can live, in a spirit of self-indulgence and enjoyment, in a spirit of acquisition and appropriation, in a spirit of pride and domination, in a spirit of creativity, in a spirit of gratitude, in a spirit of blessing and dedication. Consider a few of these possibilities.

One could give the child a name that pleases us. How could that be bad? You find your child a delight, so why not celebrate this fact with a name you find delightful? The wanted child is rewarded for being wanted by getting the wanted name, and now proves doubly pleasing to the parents. Granted, no parent who loves a child would choose for it a name he or she does not like. But is this sufficient? And what if the parent has strange tastes? A teacher of our acquaintance recently taught twin girls named—we do not jest—Lemónjello and Orángejello, after Lemon and Orange Jell-O, perhaps the mother's favorite food. The flavors of the parents are visited upon the children. But, on this principle of pleasing the parental palate, who can criticize? *De gustibus non disputandum.*

One could also give the child a name that pleases us because it pleases others, that is, because it is fashionable or popular. American fashions in first names change dramatically, especially for naming little girls. Rarely does one encounter anymore a young woman named Prudence, Constance, Faith, Hope, or Charity—though biblical names have come somewhat back into vogue. No one we knew—or had even heard of—through our first thirty years was named Tiffany or Chelsea. Yet the ten most popular newly given girls' names in New York City for 1992, as reported on records of new births, were (in order of popularity): Ashley, Stephanie, Jessica, Amanda, Samantha, Jennifer, Nicole, Michelle, Melissa, and Christina. (Challenge your friends who are over fifty, or who live in the sensible Midwest, to see if they can guess even three of the top ten.)

Curiously, the popular boys' names continue to be traditional: New York's top ten are Michael, Christopher, Jonathan, Anthony, Joseph, Daniel, David, Kevin, Matthew, and John. What this difference in boy-girl naming fashions means, especially in an age that purports at last to take women seriously, we leave for our readers to ponder.

Frivolity, self-indulgence, and love of fashion may not be the worst of attitudes. Other parents, more serious, will be moved by pride, not least by pride in the creation of a child. This may well be the paradigmatic natural attitude of parents, perhaps especially so with first-born children. Paternal pride in siring a chip off the old block leads fathers to name their first son after themselves, only Junior. But pride in childbirth is not the prerogative only of fathers. In the first (and, therefore, in our view probably prototypical)

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human birth presented in Genesis, Eve proudly boasts of her creative power in the birth of Cain: "And she conceived and bore Cain (*kayin*), saying, 'I have gotten (*kaniti*) a man [equally] with the Lord.'" (Most English translations have Eve say, piously, "with the help of the Lord," but this is an interpolation. The context, in our view, favors this meaning: "God created a man, and now so have I.") And, at first glance, why should she not be proud? She conceived, she carried, she labored, and she delivered, in short, she created a new life out of her own substance, a new life that is her own flesh and blood. Her pride in her creativity and "*own*-ership" of her son is celebrated in the name she gives him: *kayin*, from a root *kanah*, meaning *to possess*, perhaps also related to a root *koneh*, meaning to shape or make or create.

Cain, the pride of his mother's bearing, bears the name of his mother's pride, and tragically lives out the meaning of the name his mother gave him, the meaning, unbeknownst to her, of her tacit wish for him. He becomes a proud farmer, the sort of man who lays possessive claim to a portion of the earth, proud of his ability to bring forth fruit from the ground. He becomes a man who, his pride wounded, angrily kills his brother to reassert his place as number one. (When Eve, almost as an afterthought, had borne "his brother Abel," there had been no celebration or boasting; she gave to him, unwittingly but prophetically, a name that means "breath that vanishes.")

Eve, it seems, learns the folly of her naming ways. Chastened by the death of Abel and left bereft by the banishment of Cain, Eve renames her third son in a different, more humble, and grateful spirit: "And she *called* his *name* Seth, 'for *God hath appointed* [*shath*] me another seed *in place* of Abel, whom Cain slew.'" (Emphasis added.) With death and the need for replacement now manifest before her, Eve this time enters upon the act of naming and parenthood in full awareness of the human condition, in full awareness that children are not human creations, in full self-consciousness of what it means to give a *name* (the word "name" and the phrase "called his name" were not used in the report of the births of Cain and Abel).

Despite their differences, naming as self-gratification, naming as appropriation, naming as expressing pride, and naming as creativity have this in common: they all take their meaning from and refer back to the activities of the parents. They do not centrally consider the independent being of the child, or the meaning of the child understood as one who must someday stand forth as the parents' replacement. Considerations such as these at least tacitly inform the activity of naming for those parents who seek by means of the name to express, in full seriousness, their best hopes and wishes for the child. Such parents will choose a name that imparts personal or human meaning. They may stress continuity of family line, by naming a son for the father, a daughter for a grandmother. They may memorialize some worthy friend or ancestor, whose fine qualities they hope to see replicated in the child. They may name after prophets or saints or other historical or literary figures, in the hope of promoting emulation or at least admiration through namesake identification. In these various ways, parents identify their children not with themselves but with what they look up to and respect. In such namings, parents, at the very least, express their fondest hopes—blessing, as it were, their children through names of blessed memory or elevated standing. At best, they thereby dedicate themselves to the work of making good the promise conveyed in the good name thus bestowed.

The solemnity of such naming, and its meaning as dedication, is, of course, evident when names are given within religious ceremonies. At a baptism, the newborn child is symbolically purified, sanctified, and received by name into the Christian community, obtaining his or her name in an act of christening or baptizing. The child is reborn by being named in the name of the Father, the Son, and the Holy Spirit, an implicit promise by the parents to rear the child in the ways of the Lord. Among its other intentions, baptism denies the parents' natural tendency to think of the child as property or as an object of pride and power. During the ceremony, the parents ritually hand the child over to the minister or to godparents, representatives of the church and community, literally enacting the meaning of naming as dedication. The name given is understood to be eternal, inscribed in the Book of Life.

At a *brith milah*, the Jewish act of ritual circumcision, male children on the eighth day of life enter into the covenant between God and the seed of Abraham, obtaining at this time their given Hebrew name (here, too, the boy is handed over to the godfather for the ceremony); daughters are publicly named in the synagogue soon after birth. Often, the meaning of the name and the reasons for its choice are publicly discussed as the name is given. The prayer for both Jewish sons and daughters that accompanies their naming is for a life that embraces *Torah* (learning and observance), *Chuppah* (marriage and family), and *Maasim Tovim* (good deeds). Names given in such contexts are, at least implicitly, understood to be sanctifications and dedications.

It is, of course, not possible to gauge the spirit of the act of naming simply from the name given. The name of a beloved forebear may be perpetuated not because of what made him lovable but, say, because of benefits received by the namer or as a result of family expectation or as an expression of mere sentimentality. In a family we know, for example, a man named his son after his deceased father, a man of unrivaled goodness and gentleness, admired and loved by everyone who knew him, without exception

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or qualification. As it happens, the boy not only carries the grandfather's name; because he is and will be the only male child of his generation, the entire family name resides now with him. But such thoughts are alien to, even resisted by, his father, who believes that the past must be happily buried. No attempt has been made to teach the son anything about the grandfather—about his life, his character, his beliefs. Not before the boy was thirteen did he get to see a photograph of the man for whom he was named, and then only by accident in another relative's house. The boy's father, a radical, preaches and encourages distrust of tradition and authority, and now finds the teenage chicken coming home to roost. Here we have the name, ringing hollow, without a grain of the legacy. The name, like the grandfather, was liked, not revered or even properly appreciated. The child, not surprisingly, has grasped and inherited the paternal principle: "the past is dead, follow your likes." Already separating himself from his own past, he sets out to create his own identity, making himself into whatever he wishes.

Parents should, however, be mindful of the gap between hope and fact, between promise and realization. Especially when the dream implicit in the name is great, there is a danger that the name will be to the child more a burden than an inspiration. On this ground, a prospective name for our son (never born), favored by one of us, Abraham Lincoln, was vetoed by the more sensible spouse. Nature may not be cooperative, native gifts may be missing, serious illness or accident may deform and limit, and, even in the most propitious circumstances, parental plans and aspirations—even modest ones—often go unrealized, not least because well-meaning and devoted parents sometimes fail to recognize sufficiently the radical individuality of each child. For this reason, one names best when one names not only with dedication but also with modesty and humility, mindful of the child's separate identity and ultimate independence. The identity given by means of the given name de facto recognizes and celebrates the uniqueness of the life its bearer will live.

Naming a child thus anticipates exactly the central difficulty of child-rearing altogether: how to communicate unconditional love for the child-just-as-he-now-is, at the same time as one is doing all in one's power to encourage and to help him to become better (which is to say, more truly lovable). A name, likable here and now but also bearing hope and promise, fits the good-enough-but-potentially-much-better kind of being that is the human child (indeed, is the human being throughout life). Defining the child now but also for later, the given but independent name also looks forward to the time when—thanks to good rearing—he will be able to write his own named account in the Book of Life.

The given name, given seriously, thus provides identity and individuality but within family and community; recognizes continuity with lives of the past but bears hopes and promises for the new life in the future; embodies general aspiration but acknowledges individual distinction; reflects both present affection and desire for future improvement; acknowledges at least tacitly that one's child is to be one's replacement; celebrates the joyous wonder of the renewal of human possibility while accepting the awesome responsibility for helping that possibility to be realized; and pays homage to the mysterious source of human life and human individuality.

In all these ways, the naming of a child is, in fact, an emblem of the entire parent-child relation, in both its human generality and its radical particularity. Human children are born naked and nameless, like the animals; they become humanized only through rearing, the work not of nature but of acts of speech and symbolic deed, including praise and blame, reward and punishment, custom, habituation, and education. They become humanized, in the first instance, at the hands of parents, who, among other duties, try steadily to teach children how to call all things by their proper names and to show them how to acquire a good name for themselves.

III

Mention of calling things by their proper names prompts a digression on the proper usage of proper names, itself a central issue of propriety. In fact, it was observations on the prevalent use and misuse of given or first names that, long ago, aroused our interest in the subject of naming in the first place.

As amateur observers of the American social scene, we are struck by how much more of our public social life is nowadays conducted on a first-name basis. The open-faced waiter in the yuppie restaurant begins not with, "Good evening. Are you ready to order?" but with, "Hi, I'm Sherman. I'm your server this evening, and I'd like to tell you about our specials." The gynecologist and all members of his staff (including the barely post-adolescent receptionist) call all the patients by their first names, even on first encounter. In the home for the aged, venerable ladies and gentlemen are uniformly called Sadie or Annie, Herman or Mike, by people who will never know a tenth of what some of the elderly have forgotten. Small children are not taught to call uncles and aunts Uncle Leon and Aunt Amy, but plain Leon and Amy. Children of all ages are generally allowed to call all grown-up guests in the home by their first names, even on first meeting. At social mixers, the typical tag is for first names only: "Hello, My Name is Steffie." Total strangers, soliciting for stock brokerages or the local police museum, call during dinner oozing familiarity, asking to speak to Leon or Amy (not knowing that they have thus completely blown their slim chance of success). Students introduce

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themselves to one another, to their teachers, or to the parents of their friends by first names only. Even some college professors and many members of the clergy prefer to be called by their first names, even when in class or in church and synagogue.

The motives for and reasons behind such increased familiarity are numerous and sometimes complex, and surely vary from case to case. A policy favoring forward but easy amiability, thought useful for putting everyone in a good mood and making them feel at home, is no doubt part of the waiter's conduct; but there is probably also calculation that guests will be more inclined to leave a larger tip for a named "acquaintance" than for a merely anonymous servant. The gynecologist may believe he is creating a homey atmosphere that will overcome his patient's anxieties and embarrassments; but he is culpably unaware that calling vulnerable strangers by their first names is patronizing, condescending, and unprofessional, that it contributes further to the indignity of being a patient, that most women receiving pelvic examinations will not be made more comfortable by a physician who makes himself improperly familiar, and that the patient's unavoidable exposure and shame are precisely what demands that every effort should be made to uphold the patient's dignity. Informality is thought to be a boon to equality and fellow-feeling; titles like Uncle and Aunt, or even Mr. or Ms., are distancing and hierarchical. They get in the way of easy sociability, made possible when everybody, regardless of age or station, is equally just plain Bill.

The change in usage, whatever one thinks of it, is symptomatic of a general breakdown of the boundaries between public and private life, between formal and familiar, between grown-up and childish, between high and low, refined and vulgar, sacred and profane. This leveling of boundaries is itself entirely American, which is to say, it is the result of the relentless march of the democratic spirit, under the twin banners of equality and individualism. But there is something novel and especially revealing—and also especially worrisome—in the self-identification of young students away from home at college.

When we were in college—at the University of Chicago in the 1950s and early 1960s—our teachers called us by our last names, usually prefaced by Mr. or Miss; in class, we were taught to refer to our peers—even our friends—in the same formal way. This civil convention, by the way, applied equally to the faculty: no one was Professor or Doctor, everyone was Mr. or Mrs. or Miss. We did not then fully appreciate the profound good sense of these customs, but we liked them nonetheless. No longer patronized as we had been by our teachers in high school, we were being treated respectfully, like grown-ups; indeed, in name (at least) we were superficially the equals of our instructors. This was flattering, this was encouraging; this, accordingly, induced emulation and a higher level of speech and conduct in the classroom.

But the purpose of this formal nominal equality was not, in fact, to flatter the students but to mirror and encourage our shared human work. Though we were encouraged to think and speak for ourselves, speech was not personalized and the person of the speaker was not authoritative; what the teacher said, and what we ourselves said, was given weight not because of the rank of the one who said it—for we were nominally of the same rank—but only because of its truthfulness or reasonableness. Shared logos, and the joint effort to understand, made the classroom a community of fellow-learners, not just an aggregate of sometimes overlapping, sometimes clashing personal interests. Objections and criticisms of one another were muted and civil: the casual language of the street, "Leon, you dolt," was replaced by "Mr. Kass, what is your evidence?" Familiarity, not to speak of intimacy, between teacher and student (or even between student and student) was neither assumed nor promised; like all real friendships, it had to be earned.

But though friendships with teachers occasionally developed, our eye was not on such personal matters. We were courting the greater self-respect that comes with adult accomplishment. To hear ourselves called after the manner of our parents (in the case of males, exactly as our fathers were called) dimly reminded us not only who we were and where we came from but also that we were stepping forward to prepare to take our parents' place.

Now, teachers at the University of Chicago, we still continue these practices; we are known as Mrs. Kass and Mr. Kass, we call our male students Mr. and our female students Miss, Mrs., or Ms. (as they wish), and we insist that the students in class refer to one another in the same way. Our students do not protest, nearly all acquire the habit, and some have even told us how much they appreciate the contribution such civility makes to the atmosphere of learning.

But we are a vanishing breed. And we have noticed in recent years, outside of classes, a marked decline in student use of last names. If we attend a dinner in the dorms, if unfamiliar students come to office hours, if we overhear them introducing themselves to one another, we hear them give only their first names: "Hello, I'm Susie." To be sure, this is friendliness, this is informality, this is individuality. But this is also, we believe, in many cases, a tacit but quite definite denial of their origins, of their roots in families. "Hello, I'm Susie" implicitly means "I am Susie, short for *sui generis*." Changing usages regarding last names reflect changing mores regarding the meaning of last names, which in turn reflect—and may also contribute to—the changing structure of marriage and family life.

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IV

Last names or family names are of relatively recent origin in the West, becoming customary in England, for example, only toward the end of the sixteenth century. (In China, by contrast, an emperor already in 2852 B.C. decreed the universal adoption of hereditary family names.) Prior to that time, the given name, received usually at baptism, was *the* name of the person. To distinguish among persons who shared the same Christian name, surnames would be added, over and above the true name (*sur*, from *super*, "over" or "above"). Surnames had no standard meaning; they could be based on the father's name (John's son, O'Brien) or on one's occupation (Weaver or Hunter), place of residence (Bristol, Lyons, At-Water), or an epithet capturing some striking personal trait or achievement (Little, Swift, Arm-Strong).

Only gradually, starting in the early medieval period, were many of these surnames turned into hereditary family names, beginning apparently in aristocratic families and in the big cities. A big impetus toward hereditary family names came after the Council of Trent (1563) decreed that every Catholic parish keep complete registers of baptisms, including the names of the parents and grandparents along with the name of the child. When Protestant parishes soon followed suit, this practice made nearly universal the spread and use of family names. It was not law but widespread similar custom which had it that a woman upon marriage would take the last name of her husband and that their children would then automatically bear the family name.

Despite many variations from country to country—about the order of family and given names, about middle names, about the incorporation of maiden names into a woman's married name, etc.—it is now nearly universally the case that one's personal name includes (at least) one's given or individual name and one's family name. The former, a matter of parental choice, marks one's individuated identity within the larger family and signifies one's path toward one's own unique life trajectory; the latter, a matter of heritable custom, gives one a familial identity in relation to the larger social world and expresses one's ties to and the influences of a shared ancestral past. Human individuation is contextualized within families, both families of origin and families of perpetuation. Last names are ever-present reminders that we were begotten and that we belong, and, later, that we belong in order to beget.

That a family name is centrally a sign of our connected and dignified humanity we see when such names are withheld—for example, in the practice of naming slaves in the ante-bellum South. Slaves were given only first names; if they had to receive a surname to distinguish one from another, it was John's *boy*, never John's *son*. The first name individuates, but separated from a last name, it is demeaning, even meaningless. By making one everywhere familiar, the practice of using only first names makes impossible both genuine public and genuine private life; as the slaveholders understood perfectly, it makes the childish station permanent.

Well before there were surnames as family names, the ties of blood and lineage were given expression in the form of patronymics. In their classical or heroic form, the patronym was even more important than the given name, with the son being under lifelong obligation to make himself worthy of his father and thus to earn, as it were, the title to his own name.

Homer, in beginning the *Iliad*, asks the goddess to sing the wrath of *Peleus' son* Achilleus, who is first of interest precisely because he is the son of Peleus, himself the son of Aiakos, himself the son of Zeus. (On his mother's side, Achilleus is even closer to the immortals; the goddess Thetis is his mother.) With lesser parents, in Homer's world of heroes, Achilleus would have been a nonentity, one from whom nothing much would be expected. But given his pedigree, he is under strenuous obligation to live up to his name, thereby winning great glory also for his father. When Hektor, bouncing his infant son Astyanax, wishes for him that he will become an even greater warrior than his father, this wish must be heard as narcissistic: the son's greatness will pile further glory upon his sire. Homer makes us feel immediately the tragic character of such paternal wishes for one's sons; the reader knows that young Astyanax's literal future is right here being sacrificed for his father's present thirst for glory, as Hektor refuses his wife Andromache's plea, in the name of family, not to return to the fighting. In these heroic cultures, the past casts a long shadow over the present and future; and most men die failing to match the recounted successes of illustrious ancestors. The patronym (or its equivalent family name), and through it the past, continued to exercise hegemony, albeit in somewhat muted form, in European aristocratic societies even into the present century.

We liberal democrats have mercifully escaped from this state of affairs. Our American society and its founding thought begin from the radical equality of each individual, including his inalienable right to practice happiness as he himself defines it. What counts for us is not birth or station, but one's own accomplishments, not who one's parents were but what one has made (and proposes to make) of oneself. Yet bourgeois democratic family life, with its naming practices, has preserved us, at least until recently, from the rootlessness and isolation to which such individuality might lead. The conventional identity of given name plus inherited family name, in the bourgeois family, represented a sensible mean between the heroic and the anonymous, between the aristocratic tyranny of the past (Peleus' son) and the servile because rootless denial of a dignified adult

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future (Jim NoName).

Times have changed. Both as a culture and as individuals, we today care even less about where we come from, and also less and less about where we are going, but more and more only about the here and now. The ways of the fathers and mothers are not our ways. The ways of our children are unimaginable. Full individualists, and proud of it, we increasingly look solely to ourselves, as Tocqueville remarked over 150 years ago, as the sole source and reason for things. In the present generation, such individualistic thinking is showing its power against the institution of the family and customs of the family name.

Some time ago, the *New York Times* (January 21, 1993) featured an article by Janice L. Kaplan entitled "Creativity Is Often the Name of This Family Game." In the article, Ms. Kaplan cites numerous examples of novel naming practices to illustrate her thesis that "for more and more of today's parents, choosing a child's last name is a matter of personal decision, a chance to be creative, even an opportunity to make a statement." A few of her examples provide the flavor of them all.

When Elyse Goldstein, a rabbi, married Baruch Browns, a calligrapher and school administrator, they discussed what name they would "pass on" to their offspring. Both "absolutely wanted a family name" but one different from their own respective birth names, "a creative alternative to passing on only the father's surname." The solution: "They took the gold from Goldstein, the brown from Browns, mixed them together and created Sienna, the legal last name of their children." As Mr. Browns explained, "Ocher, or those other muddy yellow colors, didn't seem like nice names."

Dean Skylar and Chris Ledbetter faced a similar dilemma, but not until the birth of their son. Opposed to "the whole patriarchal tradition," they too wanted a new name for the child, different from their own names but one that would "symbolize [their] relationship." Being residents of the state of Florida, which required parents to pass on the father's surname, it took a court battle to legitimize their choice, but they eventually prevailed: they combined Ledbetter and Skylar to form Skybetter, the name of their two children, now ages ten and five. "All of our names are in the phone book," said Ms. Ledbetter. "That handles most any problem that comes up."

Ms. Van Horn, a commercial photographer and clinical hypnotherapist, and Ms. Hershey, owner of a design and marketing concern, were the first lesbians in Los Angeles County to be granted joint custody of a child. They gave their adopted son both their last names: hence, Ryan Christopher Hershey-Van Horn. As Ms. Van Horn explained, "We're both his parents. We're both women with careers. And we both have definite identities. It's important that Christopher be real clear about his identity as well."

Whether they make up an entirely new name for their children (Sienna), or creatively combine their names (Skybetter), or hyphenate their names (Hershey-Van Horn), all these parents reveal the same fundamental belief: a child's last name is a matter of free, parental choice, no less than is its first name. Having liberated themselves from the "patriarchal tradition" of women giving up their names—none of the women interviewed took the man's last name—all of these parents feel perfectly free to "liberate" their children as well. For what they have creatively managed to "pass on" is a name with no past; and the so-called "family" name is in no case the name of the entire family, but of the children only. The children are thus, already from birth, nominally (in the literal sense of the word) emancipated from all links to their parents, nominally identified as being unrelated to *either* parent, let alone to a married couple whose common name would symbolize the couple's union in a new estate and its potential to be a unified family with offspring. These children have, in fact, been given two first names.

Ms. Kaplan observes that "sometimes, say experts and the children involved, the parents' choices, *if not clearly explained*, can result in confusion and identity problems." But the worries that are mentioned are superficial: children who can't fit their names on a page or on SAT forms, children who can't spell their last names, children at risk of teasing or ridicule by peers. For the "experts," who want only that the child "develop an appropriate and healthy identity," identity is entirely a subjective matter, but somehow one that yields to "rational understanding"; if the *origin* of the surname is "clearly explained" to the child (to be sure, "more than once"), there need be no confusion of identity.

But identity is not just a state of mind. All the explanations in the world cannot alter what the child's name loudly declares: my parents and I belong to different families. Because this is how the child is named and known, his lack of a true family name is now central to his identity, whatever he may feel about it. That these creative parents sometimes justify their practice by pointing out that children of divorced and remarried parents or children of "live-in relationships" also don't share the parental name, only proves the point: taking broken or unmarried homes as a suitable nominal norm, and insisting on their own radically individuated identity, they start their children off in life with a broken family identity. It is almost as if they are preparing their children not only for the liberated life they have chosen for themselves, but also for the family fragmentation that now takes its toll of so many of America's children.

These "creative" parents are, we suspect, still a very small minority. Far more common are families in which the children carry the name of the father, even though the mother has kept her maiden name. Here, too, the confusion of identity is obvious: it is

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not nominally clear who belongs to whom. A friend of ours, a mother of a highly popular first-grader, recently attended her first PTA meeting. Eager to meet the parents of the many frequent visitors to her home, she carefully scanned the name tags of all the people in the room. But on that night the room happened to be full of mothers only, *none* of whom bore the same last name as her child. Today, it is a wise child who knows its mother.

What's wrong with all of this? Leaving aside, for now, the rightness or wrongness of the old so-called patriarchal conventions whereby the wife necessarily takes and the children automatically acquire the husband's name, one can advance powerful arguments why, for reasons of truth and identity, a child's family name should be the same as that of both his parents. The common name identifies the child securely within its nest of origin and rearing, and symbolically points to the ties of parental affection and responsibility that are needed for its healthy growth and well-being. Given that the mother-child bond is the (most) natural foundation of all familial attachments and parental care, it seems especially absurd that mothers should be willing not to have the same last name as their children—unless, of course, motherhood is understood to be nothing more than a surrogate "social womb," unconnected with nature, the "mother" looking after the children simply as a job or as a form of *self*-fulfillment.

Responsibility for the child, who did not himself ask to be born, is accepted and announced by family naming: the child, freely individuated from birth (as marked in his *given* name), also *belongs* necessarily from birth to his parents, not as a possession to be used but as a precious life to be nurtured. Couples may choose whether to have a child, but they may not morally choose to deny familial responsibility for his care. A shared and transmittable family name, given and accepted rather than invented or chosen, stands perfectly for this shared and transmittable moral reality.

The common name of parent-and-child stands not only for parental responsibilities, but also for the child's security, filial regard, family loyalty, gratitude, and personal pride. We children are not *sui generis*, neither self-made nor self-reared; we begin as dependents, dependent upon the unmerited attention and care lavished on us by our parents. To carry the family name is a constant reminder of what we owe and to whom—and of the fact that what we owe can never be repaid (except, indirectly, by doing the same for our own children). Thus, it is, at least symbolically, a special kind of blindness—not to say ingratitude—that our college students hold themselves familially innominate ("Just Susie") precisely when Mom and Dad are shelling out $20,000 a year to enable them to become educated and independent.

But this backward-looking identification with our family of origin cannot be the whole story. On the contrary, life is forward-going and regenerative; in most cases, we children must leave our fathers and mothers and cleave to our spouses, in order to do as our fathers and mothers did before. The given family of origin gives way (not wholly but in very large part) to the chosen family of perpetuation, prepared for and legally sanctioned by the act of marriage. How should this new estate and new identity be reflected in our names? When we marry what surname or surnames shall we adopt?

Whether we like it or not, choosing surnames at marriage is in today's America almost as much a matter of choice as the giving of first names at childbirth, a reflection (and perhaps also a cause) of novel conceptions of marriage, an institution the meaning of which is itself increasingly regarded as a matter of choice. The traditional bourgeois way—the husband gives and the wife accepts the husband's family name—customary for at least four hundred years in the English-speaking world, is no longer secure as customary; "because that's the way we've always done it" is, for young American ears, a losing reason. Besides, the true reasons for the old custom having been forgotten, the practitioners of the custom are impotent to defend it against charges of "patriarchy," "male hegemonism," "sexism," and the like. Thus, with no certain cultural guidance, the present generation (in fact, each couple independently) is being allowed—or should we say compelled, willy-nilly?—to think this through for itself.

We, the authors, accept the challenge, as a thought experiment, imagining ourselves as having to do it over again, but with the benefit of our now longer views of marriage and of life, and on the following additional condition: to think not on the basis of what *pleases us*, but on the basis of what we believe is appropriate to the meaning of marriage and hence, in principle, universalizable.

If marriage is, as we believe, a new estate, in fact changing the identities of both partners, there is good reason to have this changed identity reflected in some change of surname, one that reflects and announces this fact. If marriage, though entered into voluntarily, is in its inner meaning more than a contract between interested parties but rather a union made in expectation of permanence and a union open (as no simple contract of individuals can be) to the possibility of procreation, there is good reason to have the commitment to lifelong union reflected and announced in a common name that symbolizes and celebrates its special meaning.

Whether they intend it or not, individuals who individualistically keep their original names when entering a marriage are symbolically holding themselves back from the full meaning of the union. Fearing "loss of identity" in change of name, they implicitly deny that to live now toward and for one's

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beloved, as soul mate, is rather to gain a new identity, a new meaning of living a life, one toward which eros itself has pointed us. Often failing to anticipate the future likelihood of having their own children, and, more generally, unable or unwilling to see the institution of marriage as directed toward or even connected with its central *generational* raison d'être, they create in advance a confused identity for their unborn children.

The irony is that the clear personal identity to which they selfishly cling (in tacit denial of their new social identity) is in fact an identity they possess only because their parents were willing and able to create that singular family identity for them. We are, of course, aware that massive numbers of our youth stem from parents who divorce or remarry, and that the insecurity of identity already reflected in their having different names from their birth parents may lead them to cling tenaciously to their very own surnames, lest they lose the little, painfully acquired identity they have left; yet if they truly understood their plight, they would be eager to try to prevent such misfortunes from befalling their own children, and would symbolically identify themselves in advance as their (unborn) children's lifelong parents.

It is ironic that the same young people who, in their social arrangements, live only on a first name basis, forgetful at least symbolically of where they come from, should at the time of forward-looking marriage turn backward to cling to the name of their family of origin. Faced with the "threat" of "losing themselves" in marriage, they reassert themselves as independent selves, now claiming and treating the original surname as if it were—just like their given *first* name—a chosen mark of their autonomy and individuality.

The human family, unlike some animal families, is exogamous, not incestuous; it is exogamous not by nature but by the wisest of customs. The near-universal taboo against incest embodies the insight that family means a forward-looking series of generations rather than an inward-turning merging and togetherness. It keeps lineage clear—in order, among other reasons, to distinguish spouses from progeny in the service of tranquil relations, clear identity, and sound rearing—above all, to accomplish the family's primary human work of perpetuation and cultural transmission. The legal sanctification and support of marriage, a further expression of the insights embedded in the incest taboo, makes sense only on this view of family; were sex not generative and families not generational, no one would much care with whom one wished to merge.

Thus, when entering a marriage, the partners are willy-nilly bravely stepping forward, unprotected by the family of origin, into the full meaning of human adulthood: they are saying good-bye to father and mother and cleaving to their spouse. They are, tacitly, accepting the death of their parents, and even more, their own mortality, as they embark on the road to the next generation. They express not only their love of one another but also their readiness to discover, by repeating the practice, how their own family identity and nurtured humanity was the product of deliberate human choice that affirmed and elevated the natural necessity of renewal. A common name deliberately taken at the time of marriage—like the family of perpetuation that the marriage anticipates and establishes—affirms the special union of natural necessity and human choice which the exogamous family itself embodies.

This is, perhaps, an appropriate place to observe that we are well aware that family or social identity is not the whole of our identity, that professional or "career" identity is both psychically and socially important (as are civic and religious identity). The loving-and-generative aspects of our nature are far from being the whole human story. Yet the familial is foundational, and it cannot without grave danger be subordinated or assimilated to the professional. Our arguments for a common social name for the married couple is, however, perfectly compatible with having one partner or the other—or both—keeping a distinct professional name. Some have argued that in today's world of rampant mobility and weakened family ties, and with both husband and wife in the work place, much is lost and little is gained if professional identity is submerged in a common family name. But precisely to affirm and protect the precious realm of private life from the distorting intrusion of public or purely economic preoccupations, a common social name makes eminent sense—one might say *especially* under present conditions.

The argument advanced so far does not, of course, yet reach to the customary pattern of the bride taking the groom's name. If anything, it might even call into question the wisdom of allowing *either* partner to keep the surname of origin. To provide the same and new last name for the married couple, a name that proclaims their social unity and that will immediately confer social identity to their children, they could devise a hyphenated compound that both partners then adopt or they could jointly invent a totally new surname that leaves no trace of either family of origin. But these alternatives are both defective. The first is simply impractical beyond one or at most two generations; because of the exponential growth of life, one would have an exponential increase in names-to-be-hyphenated-in-new-marriages-and-in-newer-marriages-and-so-on-and-on-ad-infinitum. The structure of life itself makes impossible the universalizing of one's maxim to add-and-hyphenate.

The second alternative, in our view, too starkly severs the new social ties from the familial past (quite apart from what it means to the public individual identities of each of the partners) and to still living and remembered grandparents. It would be to fur-

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ther accentuate the unraveling of intergenerational connections, symbolizing instead each little family's atomistic belief in its ability to go it alone. In contrast, a family name that ties the new family of perpetuation to one old family of origin reflects more faithfully the truth about family as a series of generations and the moral and psychological meaning of lineage and attachment.

This leaves only the hard question: shall it be his family name or hers? A little reflection will show why, as a general rule, it should be his. Although we know from modern biology the equal contributions both parents make to the genetic identity of a child, it is still true to say that the mother is the "more natural" parent, that is, the parent *by birth*. A woman can give up a child for adoption or, thanks to modern reproductive technologies, can even bear a child not genetically her own. But there is no way to deny out of whose body the new life sprung, whose substance it fed on, who labored to produce it, who wondrously bore it forth. The father's role in all this is minuscule and invisible; in contrast to the mother, there is no *naturally* manifest way to demonstrate his responsibility.

The father is thus a parent more by choice and agreement than by nature (and not only because he cannot know with absolute certainty that the woman's child is indeed his own). One can thus explain the giving of the paternal surname in the following way: the father symbolically announces "his choice" that the child is his, fully and freely accepting responsibility for its conception and, more importantly, for its protection and support, and answering in advance the question which only wise children are said to be able to answer correctly: Who's my Dad?

The husband who gives his name to his bride in marriage is thus not just keeping his own; he is owning up to what it means to have been given a family and a family name by his own father—he is living out his destiny to be a father by saying yes to it in advance. And the wife does not so much surrender her name as she accepts the gift of his, given and received as a pledge of (among other things) loyal and responsible fatherhood for her children. A woman who refuses this gift is, whether she knows it or not, tacitly refusing the promised devotion or, worse, expressing her suspicions about her groom's trustworthiness as a husband and prospective father.

Patrilineal surnames are, in truth, less a sign of paternal prerogative than of paternal duty and professed commitment, reinforced psychologically by gratifying the father's vanity in the perpetuation of his name and by offering this nominal incentive to do his duty both to mother and child. Such human speech and naming enables the father explicitly to choose to become the parent-by-choice that he, more than the mother, must necessarily be.

Fathers who will not own up to their paternity, who will not "legitimize" their offspring, and who will not name themselves responsible for child-rearing by giving their children their name are, paradoxically, not real fathers at all, and their wives and especially their children suffer. The former stigmatization of bastardy was, in fact, meant to protect women and children from such irresponsible behavior of self-indulgent men (behavior probably naturally rooted in mammalian male psychosexual tendencies), men who would take their sexual pleasures and walk away from their consequences. The removal of the stigma, prompted by a humane concern not to penalize innocent children by calling them "illegitimate," has, paradoxically but absolutely predictably, contributed mightily to an increase in such fatherless children.

The advantage a woman and her children gain from the commitment of the man to take responsibility and to stay the course—the commitment implied in his embracing the woman and her prospective children with his family name, now newly understood—is by itself sufficient reason why it is in a woman's interest as a married-woman-and-mother-to-be to readily take the bridegroom's name.

But there is a deeper reason why this makes sense. The change of the woman's name, from family of origin to family of perpetuation, is the perfect emblem for the desired exogamy of human sexuality and generation. The woman in marriage not only expresses her humanity in love (as does the man); she also embraces the meaning of marriage by accepting the meaning of her *womanly* nature as generative. In shedding the name of her family of origin, she tacitly affirms that children of her womb can be legitimated only exogamously. Her children will not bear the same name as—will not "belong to"—her father; moreover, her new name allows also her father to recognize formally the mature woman his daughter has become. Whereas the man needs convention to make up—by expansion—for his natural deficiency, the woman needs convention to humanize—by restriction—the result of her natural prowess. By anticipating necessity and by thus choosing to accept the gift of her husband's name, the woman affirms the meaning of her own humanity by saying yes to customizing her given nature.

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Almost none of what they now believe they understand about the meanings and uses of names did the authors know when, following custom, they first joined their lives together under the bridegroom's family name. They had, at best, only tacit and partial knowledge when they deliberately gave their children biblical names. Had they been left, in their youth, to invent their own practices of naming, it is doubtful that they would have gotten it right. In place of their

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own knowledge, they were guided by the blessed example of the strong, enduring, and admirable marriages and home-life of their parents, itself sustained by teachings silently conveyed through custom and ritual. Wisdom in these matters, for individual thinkers, comes slowly if at all. But custom, once wisely established, more than makes up for our deficiencies. It makes possible the full flourishing of our humanity.

William Butler Yeats said it best, in "A Prayer for My Daughter":

> And may her bridegroom bring her to a house
> Where all's accustomed, ceremonious;
> For arrogance and hatred are the wares
> Peddled in the thoroughfares.
> How but in custom and in ceremony
> Are innocence and beauty born?
> Ceremony's a name for the rich horn,
> And custom for the spreading laurel tree. FT

Butterfly

Remember how they told us
a butterfly is proof
all that matters is a glorious end?
The time will come, we won't even
recall these changes,
our essential selves working
to shed their clumsy clothes,
first the egg, then larva, then
the pupa, they say, and we'll crawl out
radiant, to bat our wings,
more stunning, even, than Liz Taylor's
bright blue eyelids. But
I watch the butterfly
sitting on the trumpet vine
pumping his wings to dry them,
waving his feelers experimentally,
his lips moving as if to murmur to
his past selves. I can almost see the old egg
answering, his own grandmother
who remembers him the longest.
She might be saying tenderly
that he should take his time,
she will someday tell him
who he is,
where he came from.

Jeanne Murray Walker

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The Crimes of Christopher Columbus

Dinesh D'Souza

Multiculturalism is presented by its advocates in the schools and universities as a benign alternative to monoculturalism. Historian Peter Stearns insists that the multicultural debate "is between those who think there are special marvelous features about the Western tradition that students should be exposed to, and others who feel it's much more important for students to have a sense of the way the larger world has developed." This is the unmistakable appeal of multiculturalism: it is obviously better to study many cultures rather than a single culture, to have diverse points of view rather than a single one.

Yet if multiculturalism represented nothing more than an upsurge of interest in other cultures, it would be uncontroversial. Who can possibly be against hundreds of thousands of American students studying the *Analects* of Confucius or the philosophical writings of Alfarabi and Avicenna? The debate about multiculturalism is not over whether to study other cultures but how to study the West and other cultures. Multiculturalism is better understood as a civil conflict within the Western academy over contrasting approaches to learning about the world.

Critics of multiculturalism such as Allan Bloom, E. D. Hirsch, and Arthur Schlesinger have argued for an emphasis on Western civilization. Bloom asserts in *The Closing of the American Mind* that American students are aliens in their own culture—abysmally ignorant of the philosophical, historical, and economic foundations of the West. Hirsch in *Cultural Literacy* lists numerous literary references, historical facts, and scientific concepts that American students should know but apparently don't. Schlesinger argues in *The Disuniting of America* that students should study Western civilization because it is their own. "We don't have to believe that our values are absolutely better than the next fellow's. People with a different history will have differing values. But we believe that our own are better for us."

Schlesinger's relativist argument for a Western canon is open to the objection, What do you mean *we*, white man? Literary critic Gerald Graff asks, in an ethnically diverse society, "who gets to determine which values are common and which merely special?" Barbara Herrnstein-Smith contends that different groups share "different sets of beliefs, interests, assumptions, attitudes, and practices. . . . There is no single comprehensive culture that transcends any or all other cultures."

At its deepest level, multiculturalism represents a denial of all Western claims to truth. In a recent book, literary critic Stanley Fish spurns the very possibility of transcultural standards of evaluation. "What are these truths and by whom are they to be identified?" In Fish's view, "The truths any of us find compelling will all be partial, which is to say they will all be political." Another scholar, Barbara Johnson, identifies the multicultural project with "the deconstruction of the foundational ideals of Western civilization." Anthropologist Renato Rosaldo urges the rejection of "timeless universals," and philosopher Richard Rorty declares the need "to abandon traditional notions of rationality, objectivity, method, and truth." The multicultural challenge is cogently summarized by philosopher John Searle:

> Religion, history, tradition, and morality have always been subjected to searching criticism in the name of rationality, truth, evidence, reason, and logic. Now reason, truth, rationality, and logic are themselves subject to these criticisms. The idea is that they're as much a part of the dogmatic, superstitious, mystical, power-laden tradition as anything that they were used to attack.

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"Culture" for modern scholars (and also in colloquial use) has nothing to do with Matthew Arnold's deployment of universal standards of reason and taste to identify "the best which has been thought and said in the world." Today's advocates of multiculturalism uphold rival propositions: that there are many cultures, that Western standards are invalid for understanding non-Western cultures, that all truths are ideological, and that cultures should therefore be placed on a roughly equal plane. Cultural relativism—the presumed equality of all cultures—is the intellectual foundation of contemporary multiculturalism.

"Show me the Proust of the Papuans," Saul Bellow is reported to have said, "and I'll read him." Bellow did not say that the Papuans lack the capacity to produce their own Proust; he simply suggested that, as far as he was aware, they had not. Yet his remark, by hinting at the possibility of Western cultural superiority, seemed to deny to other cultures what philosopher Charles Taylor terms "the politics of equal recognition." As Taylor correctly describes it, the multicultural paradigm holds that "true judgments of value of different works would place all cultures more or less on the same footing." Multiculturalism is based on a thoroughgoing repudiation of Western cultural superiority. Reflecting a widely held view, literary scholar Mary Louise Pratt termed Bellow's remark "astoundingly racist."

Yet both in the world and in the traditional curriculum, all cultures are not on the same footing. Consequently multiculturalism in practice is distinguished by an effort to establish cultural parity by attacking the historical and contemporary hegemony of Western civilization. To do it, activists draw heavily on such leftist movements as Marxism, deconstructionism, and anticolonial or Third World nationalism. Social critic Edward Said blames Western imperialism for the sufferings of "ravaged colonial peoples who for centuries endured summary justice, unending economic oppression, distortion of their social and intimate lives, and a recourseless submission that was the function of unchanging European superiority."

Multiculturalism is based on the relativist assumption that since all cultures are inherently equal, differences of power, wealth, and achievement between them are most likely due to oppression. Sociologist Robert Blauner argues that these global disparities are replicated within the United States, so that blacks, American Indians, and nonwhite immigrations constitute a kind of Third World within the United States. Additionally, the African-American scholar Henry Louis Gates contends that a curriculum focused on the great works of Western civilization "represents the return of an order in which my people were the subjugated, the voiceless, the invisible, the unrepresented."

To compensate for these historical and curricular injuries and restore cultural parity between ethnic groups, advocates of multiculturalism seek to reinforce the self-esteem of minority students by presenting non-Western cultures in a favorable light. James Banks argues that multiculturalism should fight racism by helping students "to develop positive attitudes" about minority and non-Western groups. Deborah Batiste and Pamela Harris urge in a multicultural manual for teachers, "Avoid dwelling on the negatives which may be associated with a cultural or ethnic group. Every culture has positive characteristics which should be accentuated." Historian Ronald Takaki argues that blacks, Hispanics, and American Indians were no less responsible than whites for shaping the ideas and institutions of the United States: "What we need is a new conceptualization of American history where there's no center, and there's no margin, but we have all these groups engaging in discourse . . . unlearning much of what we have been told . . . in the creation of a new society."

In order to see the multicultural paradigm at work, we would do well to consider the passionate debate that has raged in the academy over the legacy of Christopher Columbus. Provoked by the five hundredth anniversary of the Columbus landing, virtually every leading advocate of multiculturalism—Edward Said, Stephen Greenblatt, Kirkpatrick Sale, Gary Nash, Ronald Takaki, Patricia Limerick, Garry Wills—lashed out against Columbus or his successors. Yet it is not Columbus the man who is being indicted but what he represents: the first tentative step toward the European settlement of the Americas. Consequently, the debate over Columbus is a debate over whether Western civilization was a good idea and whether it should continue to shape the United States. Many critics argue the negative:

- "Columbus makes Hitler look like a juvenile delinquent," asserts American Indian activist Russell Means.
- Winona LaDuke deplores "the biological, technological, and ecological invasion that began with Columbus' ill-fated voyage five hundred years ago."
- The National Council of Churches declares the anniversary of Columbus "not a time for celebration" but for "reflection and repentance" in which whites must acknowledge a continuing history of "oppression, degradation, and genocide."
- Historian Glenn Morris accuses Columbus of being "a murderer, a rapist, the architect of a policy of genocide that continues today."
- "Could it be that the human calamity caused by the arrival of Columbus," African-American writer Ishmael Reed asks, "was a sort of dress rehearsal of what is to come as the ozone becomes more depleted, the earth warms, and the rain forests are destroyed?"
- "All of us have been socialized to be racists and benefit from racism constantly," Christine Slater laments

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in the journal *Multicultural Education*. "The very locations on which our homes rest should rightfully belong to Indian nations."

• Literary scholar Stephen Greenblatt alleges that Columbus "inaugurated the greatest experiment in political, economic, and cultural cannibalism in the history of the Western world."

Let us examine the consistent portrait that emerges in multicultural literature about the legacy of Columbus. The advocates of multiculturalism are unanimous that Columbus did not discover America. As Francis Jennings writes in *The Invasion of America*, "The Europeans did not settle a virgin land. They invaded and displaced a native population." American Indian activist Mike Anderson says, "There was a culture here and there were people and there were governments here prior to the arrival of Columbus." Kirkpatrick Sale contends, "We can say with assurance that no such event as a 'discovery' took place." Novelist Homer Aridjis contends that Europeans and native Indians "mutually discovered each other." Garry Wills, Gary Nash, Ronald Takaki, and other scholars typically speak not of a "discovery" but of an "encounter."

But all of this is wordplay. The real issue, as Leszek Kolakowski points out, is that "the impulse to explore has never been evenly distributed among the world's civilizations." It is no coincidence that it was Columbus who reached the Americas and not American Indians who arrived on the shores of Europe. The term "encounter" conceals this difference by implying civilizational contact on an equal plane between the Europeans and the Indians.

The multiculturalists are equally unanimous that Columbus, as the prototypical Western white male, carried across the Atlantic racist prejudices against the native peoples. Gary Nash charges that Columbus embodied a peculiar "European quality of arrogance" rooted in irrational hostility to Indians. In a similar vein, Kirkpatrick Sale in *The Conquest of Paradise* argues that Columbus "presumed the inferiority of the natives," thus embodying the basic ingredients of the Western racist imagination that was bred to "fear what it did not comprehend, and hate what it knew as fearful." For Sale, Europeans are especially predisposed to violence, while the native cultures live in a "prelapsarian Eden." Sale concludes, "It is not fanciful to see warring against species as Europe's preoccupation as a culture."

It is true that Columbus harbored strong prejudices about the peaceful islanders whom he misnamed "Indians"—he was prejudiced in their favor. For Columbus, they were "the handsomest men and the most beautiful women" he had ever encountered. He praised the generosity and lack of guile among the Tainos, contrasting their virtues with Spanish vices. He insisted that although they were without religion, they were not idolaters; he was confident that their conversion would come through gentle persuasion and not through force. The reason, he noted, is that Indians possess a high natural intelligence. There is no evidence that Columbus thought that Indians were congenitally or racially inferior to Europeans. Other explorers such as Pedro Alvares Cabral, Amerigo Vespucci, Ferdinand Magellan, and Walter Raleigh registered similar positive impressions about the new world they found.

So why did European attitudes toward the Indian, initially so favorable, subsequently change? Kirkpatrick Sale, Stephen Greenblatt, and others offer no explanation for the altered European perception. But the reason given by the explorers themselves is that Columbus and those who followed him came into sudden, unexpected, and gruesome contact with the customary practices of some other Indian tribes. While the first Indians that Columbus encountered were hospitable and friendly, other tribes enjoyed fully justified reputations for brutality and inhumanity. On his second voyage Columbus was horrified to discover that a number of the sailors he left behind had been killed and possibly eaten by the cannibalistic Arawaks.

Similarly, when Bernal Diaz arrived in Mexico with the swashbuckling army of Hernan Cortes, he and his fellow Spaniards were not shocked to witness slavery, the subjection of women, or brutal treatment of war captives; these were familiar enough practices among the conquistadors. But they were appalled at the magnitude of cannibalism and human sacrifice. As Diaz describes it, in an account generally corroborated by modern scholars:

> They strike open the wretched Indian's chest with flint knives and hastily tear out the palpitating heart which, with the blood, they present to the idols in whose name they have performed the sacrifice. Then they cut off the arms, thighs, and head, eating the arms and thighs at their ceremonial banquets. The head they hang up on a beam, and the body of the sacrificed man is not eaten but given to the beasts of prey.

When Cortes captured the Aztec emperor Montezuma and his attendants, he would only permit them temporary release on the promise that they stop their traditional practices of cannibalism and human sacrifice, but he found that "as soon as we turned our heads they would resume their old cruelties." Aztec cannibalism, writes anthropologist Marvin Harris, "was not a perfunctory tasting of ceremonial tidbits." Indeed the Aztecs on a regular basis consumed human flesh in a stew with peppers and tomatoes, and children were regarded as a particular delicacy. Cannibalism was prevalent among the Aztecs, Guarani, Iroquois, Caribs, and several other tribes.

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Moreover, the Aztecs of Mexico and the Incas of South America performed elaborate rites of human sacrifice, in which thousands of captive Indians were ritually murdered, until their altars were drenched in blood, bones were strewn everywhere, and priests collapsed with exhaustion from stabbing their victims. The law of the Incas provided for punishment of parents and others who displayed grief during human sacrifices. When men of noble birth died, wives and concubines were often strangled and buried with them.

Multicultural textbooks, committed to a contemporary version of the noble savage portrait, cannot acknowledge historical facts that would embarrass the morality tale of white invaders despoiling the elysian harmony of the Americans. Kirkpatrick Sale dismisses all European accounts of Indian atrocities as fanciful: "Organized violence was not an attribute of traditional Indian societies." Seeking to explain away the gory evidence, Sale adds, "It is hard to think that European seamen would be able to distinguish a disembodied neck or arm as distinctly human, and not from a monkey or a dog, and in any case there is no evidence that they were to be eaten." Stephen Greenblatt acknowledges the existence of human sacrifice but faults the Europeans for not recognizing its "deepest resemblance" to one of their own cultural practices: after all, Greenblatt says, the Spanish themselves symbolically consumed the body and blood of Christ in the Eucharist, and ritual murder is merely a "weirdly literal Aztec equivalent."

Consider a recent analysis of two books on the Aztecs, published as a guide for teachers in *Multicultural Review*. The first book, Francisco Alarcon's *Snake Poems: An Aztec Invocation*, receives high praise as "a wonderful celebration of Aztec religion, beliefs, and customs, intermingled with the thoughts and feelings of today's Mexican Americans." The second book, Tim Wood's *The Aztecs*, is denounced for its "sensationalistic and lurid manner. . . . The Aztec practice of human sacrifice is described in gory detail. This book is a distortion of the Aztecs." This review illustrates the way in which the relativist ideology shapes the predispositions of the advocates of multiculturalism.

In the next item of the multiculturalists' indictment, Columbus—and by extension the West—is accused of perpetrating a campaign of genocidal extermination, a holocaust against native Americans. Kirkpatrick Sale charges the successors of Columbus with "something we must call genocide within a single generation." Claude Levi-Strauss charges that millions of Indians "died of horror and disgust at European civilization." Tzvetan Todorov in *The Conquest of America* accuses his fellow-Europeans of perpetrating "the greatest genocide in human history."

The charge of genocide is largely sustained by figures showing the precipitous decline of the Indian population. Although scholars debate the exact numbers, in Alvin Josephy's estimate, the Indian population fell from between fifteen and twenty million when the white man first arrived to a fraction of that 150 years later. Undoubtedly the Indians perished in great numbers. Yet although European enslavement of Indians and the Spanish forced labor system extracted a heavy toll in lives, the vast majority of Indian casualties occurred not as a result of hard labor or deliberate destruction but because of contagious diseases that the Europeans transmitted to the Indians.

The spread of infection and unhealthy patterns of behavior was also reciprocal. From the Indians the Europeans contracted syphilis. The Indians also taught the white man about tobacco and cocaine, which would extract an incalculable human toll over the next several centuries. The Europeans, for their part, gave the Indians measles and smallpox. (Recent research has shown that tuberculosis predated the European arrival in the new world.) Since the Indians had not developed any resistance or immunity to these unfamiliar ailments, they perished in catastrophic numbers.

This was a tragedy of great magnitude, but the term "genocide" is both anachronistic and wrongly applied in that, with a few gruesome exceptions, the European transmission of disease was not deliberate. As William McNeill points out in *Plagues and Peoples*, Europeans themselves probably contracted the bubonic plague in the fourteenth century as a result of contagion from the Mongols of Central Asia—some twenty-five million (one third of the population) died, and the plague recurred on the continent for the next three hundred years. Multicultural advocates do not call this "genocide."

The reason advocates of multiculturalism charge Columbus with genocide is that they need to explain how small groups of Europeans were able to defeat overwhelming numbers of Indians, capsize their mighty native empires, and seize their land. Hernan Cortes rode into Mexico with around five hundred men, sixteen horses, and a few dozen long-barrel guns. The Aztec force that he faced numbered more than a million. When Gonzalo Pizarro confronted the Inca he had three ships, 150 men, one cannon, and thirty horses. The Incas had several hundred thousand troops ruling over a population of several million. Yet the Aztecs and the Incas were routed.

How did the Spanish prevail? The triumph of the Spanish over the Indians is an interesting dilemma because no army, however well-trained, can overcome such numerical odds. Nor did the slow-loading European rifles provide a decisive advantage. It is true that many Indians were astonished at the mobility of European troops on horseback—the Indians

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had no horses before the Spanish imported them to the Americas—but the novelty of Spanish cavalry could only have caused temporary confusion in the ranks of the enemy. Undoubtedly one factor that contributed to European victory was the defection to the Spanish side of a sizable number of Indians who came from tribes that had long been colonized and persecuted by the Aztecs and the Incas. Yet these are only partial explanations.

Mario Vargas Llosa, the Peruvian writer and statesman, offers an arresting theory. However small their numbers, however crude their representatives, Europeans came to the Americas with a civilizational ideology that was unquestionably modern, even if embryonically so. Among the ingredients of this modernity were a rational understanding of the universe and a new understanding of individual initiative.

By contrast, the Indians still lived in the world of the spirits—the enchanted universe. They could not adapt to changing circumstances. They confused the Europeans with gods. They sought to reverse casualties by sacrificing their own soldiers to the totems. When Montezuma's military advisers and soothsayers warned him of ill-omens he ordered them imprisoned and their wives and children killed. The Indians were held in paralyzing obedience to the emperor. They were accustomed to exterminating their inferiors but were unfamiliar with the challenges of combat against well-armed peers.

In short, the Indians were defeated and massacred because, by a cruel juxtaposition of history, they encountered, even in the persons of "semi-literate, implacable, and greedy swordsmen," a Spanish civilization that was superior both in the sophistication of its arms and its ideas. Even today, Vargas Llosa argues, the principles of the West continue to shape the modern world, and "the nations that reject those values are anachronisms condemned to various versions of despotism."

Because of his defense of the West, Vargas Llosa has been criticized for advancing a reactionary position. Yet in a similar vein the left-wing Mexican novelist and diplomat Carlos Fuentes argues that the Europeans prevailed over the Indians because their empirical approach to knowledge gave them enormous civilizational confidence. By contrast, the Indians relied on a combination of direct perception, dreams, hallucination, and appeals to the spirits. Fuentes writes in *The Buried Mirror*, "The so-called discovery of America, whatever one might ideologically think about it, was a great triumph of scientific hypothesis over physical perception."

The West even supplied the Americas with a doctrine of human rights that would provide the basis for a sustained critique of Western colonialism. We may join Kirkpatrick Sale, Stephen Greenblatt, and others in expressing outrage at wanton Western seizure of Indian lands and abuses of basic rights. But upon reflection we would have to admit that these criticisms depend upon concepts of property rights and human rights that are entirely Western. Long before Columbus, Indian tribes raided each other's land and preyed on the possessions and persons of more vulnerable groups. What distinguished Western colonialism was neither occupation nor brutality but a countervailing philosophy of rights that is unique in human history.

Shortly after the Spanish established their settlements in the Americas, the King of Spain in the mid-sixteenth century called a halt to expansion pending the resolution of a famous debate over the question of whether Spanish conquest violated the natural and moral law. Never before or since, writes historian Lewis Hanke, has a powerful emperor "ordered his conquests to cease until it was decided if they were just." The main reason for the King's action was the relentless work of exposing colonial abuses that was performed by a Spanish bishop, Bartolome de las Casas. A former slave owner, Las Casas underwent a crisis of conscience which convinced him that the new world should be peacefully Christianized, that Indians should not be exploited, and that those who were had every right to rebel. Las Casas wrote his *Account of the Destruction of the Indies*, he said, "so that if God determines to destroy Spain, it may be seen that it is because of the destruction that we have wrought in the Indies."

Although Las Casas is sometimes portrayed as a heroic eccentric, in fact his basic position in favor of Indian rights was directly adopted by Pope Paul III, who proclaimed in his bull *Sublimis Deus* in 1537:

> Indians and all other people who may later be discovered by the Christians are by no means to be deprived of their liberty or the possession of their property, even though they be outside the faith of Jesus Christ; nor should they be in any way enslaved; should the contrary happen it shall be null and of no effect. Indians and other peoples should be converted to the faith of Jesus Christ by preaching the word of God and by the example of good and holy living.

Leading Jesuit theologians such as Francisco de Vitoria and Francisco Súarez interpreted the Bible and the Catholic tradition to require that the natural rights of Indians be respected, that their conversions be obtained through persuasion and not force, that their land and property be secure from arbitrary confiscation, and that their right to resist Spanish incursions in a "just war" be upheld.

More than a century before Locke, and two centuries before the French and American revolutions, theologians at the University of Salamanca developed the first outlines of the modern doctrine of inviolable human rights. Although these rights were often abused in practice, largely because there was no

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effective mechanism for enforcement, they provided a moral foundation for the eventual enfranchisement of the native Indians. Multicultural textbooks are typically sparse in their acknowledgment of the liberal tradition of the West associated with Las Casas. The reason for this reticence is that liberalism is uniquely a Western achievement, and hence could provide a possible foundation for a claim to Western cultural superiority.

In order to undermine this claim, advocates of multiculturalism insist on the contribution of the American Indians to the West. There is little doubt that American Indians taught the white man a great deal: about canoes, snowshoes, moccasins, and kayaks. The hammock is an Indian invention. Indians also introduced Europeans to new crops: corn, potatoes, peanuts, squash, avocados, and other vegetables and fruits. Ronald Takaki informs us that "the term *okay* was derived from the Choctaw word *oke*, meaning: it is so." Yet even when one adds the heroic exploits of Crazy Horse, Sitting Bull, Chief Joseph, and Geronimo, it is not clear that American Indian society has established cultural parity with the West.

Consequently, advocates of multiculturalism frequently proceed to make an audacious claim: that the fundamental institutions for the recognition of liberal rights, such as the U.S. Constitution, were not the exclusive product of Western civilization but were decisively influenced by such groups as the Iroquois Indians. Anthropologist Thomas Riley asserts that the League of the Iroquois served "as a model for the confederation that would make up the United States." Alvin Josephy credits the Iroquois with being "particularly influential" on the thinking of the framers in Philadelphia. Jack Weatherford in *Indian Givers* observes that the Iroquois provided a blueprint "by which the settlers might be able to fashion a new government."

If these claims are true, then surely the past refusal of teachers to credit the Iroquois for the Bill of Rights and other vital instruments of liberal freedom provides a classic example of the kind of bias that multicultural advocates have insisted pervades the traditional curriculum. Historian Elisabeth Tooker investigated the issue and discovered that the main evidence linking the Iroquois to the American founding is a letter written by Benjamin Franklin in 1754.

> It would be a strange thing if six nations of ignorant savages should be capable of forming a scheme for such a union, and be able to executive it in such a manner as that it has subsisted for ages and appears indissoluble, and yet that a like union should be impracticable for ten or a dozen English colonies, to whom it is more necessary and must be more advantageous, and who cannot be supposed to want an equal understanding of their interests.

Franklin is saying, in other words, if the barbarians can work out their problems and form a union, surely we civilized people can do as well.

In her inquiry, Tooker explores the similarities between the Iroquois League and the American Constitution and finds that they are virtually nonexistent. The League consisted of tribal chiefs whose title was partly hereditary. Only one tribe, the Onondagas, were permitted as "firekeepers" to present topics for consideration. All rulings by the League required unanimous consent. The claim that the Iroquois were the secret force behind the American Constitution is a myth, sustained only by ideology.

While advocates of multiculturalism are right to criticize many of the old texts, in which Columbus is presented as a valiant adventurer and American Indians are scarcely to be seen, contemporary activists merely replace the old biases with new ones. Columbus has metamorphosed from a grand crusader into a genocidal maniac and a precursor to Hitler. American Indians are now beyond reproach, canonized as moral and ecological saints.

In order to establish cultural parity, multiculturalists are routinely compelled to emphasize Western oppression and non-Western virtue. They are driven to downplay the illiberal traditions of other cultures even as they suppress the distinctively liberal tradition of the West. The consequence is that multiculturalism becomes an obstacle to true cultural understanding, and implants in students an unjustified animus toward the liberal societies of the West. Both truth and justice suffer as a consequence.

Ultimately cultural relativism itself, the intellectual scaffolding of multiculturalism, becomes the issue. One of the starting premises of relativism is that most Americans cannot objectively study minority and non-Western cultures because they will necessarily view them through a prism of Eurocentric assumptions. The multiculturalists are certainly right that none of us approach other societies in a culturally nude state: our perspective is necessarily shaped and perhaps clouded by our prior beliefs. But if this means that we have no way to transcend our beliefs and approach the ideal of objectivity, then multiculturalism becomes an illusion—for other cultures would constitute inaccessible and incommensurable worlds, and Westerners could only project their own values onto the cultures they appear to be studying. The assumption that other cultures are self-contained and untranslatable systems leads, ironically, to the conclusion that it is a waste of time for outsiders to attempt the inherently impossible project of understanding other cultures. Richard Rorty has reached precisely this conclusion, arguing in *Objectivity, Relativism, and Truth* that Westerners should be

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unabashedly ethnocentric because they cannot be anything else.

The vast majority of multicultural advocates reject Rorty's position, because it exposes multiculturalism as Eurocentric, whereas activists like to think of themselves as fighting Eurocentrism. Multicultural advocates such as Renato Rosaldo, Richard Delgado, and Ian Haney-Lopez typically argue that schools should recruit minority and Third World representatives who can provide much-needed black, Hispanic, Asian, and American Indian perspectives. In some cases, activists insist that it is inadequate for minority recruits to have the right skin color: they must also espouse progressive and left-wing views.

Of course, the question remains how we know that these progressive, left-wing, minority recruits truly represent their cultures. They may well represent marginal factions, or even be Eurocentric imposters.

Multicultural advocates typically avoid this problem by asserting that education does provide a bridge between cultures, and with proper training students can be taught to appreciate the equal worth of all cultures. "If we develop cultural consciousness and intercultural competence," Christine Bennett writes, "we may be able to understand that we might very well accept and even participate in such behaviors had we been born and raised in that society." But this conclusion does not follow from its premises. If standards of judgment derive from within cultures, we cannot arrive at external standards of evaluation that permit us to judge all cultures as valid for the people who live under them. Multicultural activists rely on the sleight-of-hand in which "I cannot know" becomes "I cannot judge" which becomes "I know that we are all equal." A skeptical confession of ignorance mysteriously becomes a dogmatic assertion of cultural egalitarianism.

This is not to condone approaching other cultures with a presumption of their inferiority. As Charles Taylor argues, "It makes sense to demand as a matter of right that we approach the study of other cultures with a presumption of their value." Thus cultural relativism may provide a valuable methodological starting point of humility and intellectual openness. Yet as Taylor points out, in evaluating other cultures "it can't make sense to demand as a matter of right that we come up with a final concluding judgment that their value is great or equal to others." Perhaps a careful examination of other cultures will reveal good reasons to be critical of other cultures, just as we are often critical of our own culture.

Indeed the first thing we notice when we study other cultures is that without exception they reject the cultural relativism that is a uniquely Western ideology. It should come as no surprise that relativism provokes a sharp resistance from people in other cultures. Imagine the legitimate anger of a Muslim who is cheerfully informed by a Western academic that Allah's teachings are true *for him*, when he deeply believes that they are universal principles. Moreover, as Leszek Kolakowski points out, it seems paternalistic to say that Islamic practices such as punishing thieves by cutting off their limbs represent legitimate judicial options—for *those* people. Such arguments, implying that our kind of people deserve democracy and human rights but their kind of people do not, seem self-serving and destructive to the contemporary aspirations of millions of Third World peoples. In a stunning admission, Claude Levi-Strauss writes:

> The dogma of cultural relativism is challenged by the very people for whose moral benefit the anthropologists established it in the first place. The complaint the underdeveloped countries advance is not that they are being Westernized, but that there is too much delay in giving the means to Westernize themselves. It is of no use to defend the individuality of human cultures against those cultures themselves.

A sincere effort to study other cultures "from within" requires a rejection of the Western lens of cultural relativism. Multiculturalists who wish to take non-Western cultures seriously must take seriously their repudiation of relativism. Otherwise a humble openness to other cultures becomes an arrogant dismissal of their highest claims to truth.

Students do need to be exposed to the great accomplishments of other cultures, as well as their influence on the West. But when multiculturalism goes beyond this to insist that we should understand cultural differences without applying (inherently biased) standards of critical evaluation, it forbids at the outset the possibility that one culture may be in crucial respects superior to another. An initial openness to the truths of other cultures degenerates into a closed-minded denial of all transcultural standards. Seeking to avoid an acknowledgment of Western cultural superiority, relativism ends up denying the possibility of truth.

The purpose of a liberal education, as Cardinal Newman defined it, is to "educate the intellect to reason well in all matters, to reach out towards truth, and to grasp it." Schools and colleges should provide young people with an authentic multicultural curriculum that begins at home but is nevertheless open to the world beyond. Such a canon would be modestly Eurocentric, in recognition of the facts that we live in a Eurocentric world, that Europe has dominated the rest of the globe in the modern age, and that while the popular culture in America is culturally hybrid, the philosophical, political, legal, and economic institutions of this country are the product of European culture and no other.

Yet this new curriculum would also be cosmopolitan, seeking to criticize and enrich Western civiliza-

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tion with ideas imported from abroad. An authentic multiculturalism would expose students to "the best that has been thought and said" not simply in the West but in other cultures as well. The object is not diversity but knowledge: students should learn ways to seek to distinguish truth from falsehood, beauty from vulgarity, right from wrong. Knowledge is both a matter of ascertaining fact and a developing of the tools to formulate "right opinion." To use Plato's famous image, we live our lives in a cave, mistaking shadows for reality, but it is the aspiration of an authentic multicultural education to help us move from opinion to knowledge, to climb out of the darkness into the illuminating light of the sun. FT

What to Pack

When you are going to the hospital
For heart surgery on your infant son
Who will be there for a week
If he is lucky.
I pack for the week.
One pair cotton pajamas with flap.
He will be lucky.
I pack this statement in his bag.
One pair cotton socks.
His bag is black,
His socks are blue.
One blanket, cotton.
My heart is black.
One blanket, wool.
My fingers are bleeding
Because I am eating them.
One bag of diapers.
I am eating myself like a trapped fox.
One bag of wipes.
My fingers are bleeding on his black bag.
One Junior Policeman badge from local police force.
One Zuni bear fetish with two magic pebbles.
He is sleeping as I am packing.
He is snoring like a walrus.
One blanket, cotton.
My wife carries him out to the car in the rain.
I start the car.

Brian Doyle

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The Moral Incompetence of the Judiciary

Gregory C. Sisk

> A society so riven that the spirit of moderation is gone, no court *can* save; . . . a society where that spirit flourishes, no court *need* save; . . . in a society which evades its responsibility by thrusting upon the courts the nurture of that spirit, that spirit in the end will perish.
>
> — Judge Learned Hand

During the past three decades, a vision of the federal judiciary as the moral tutor appointed for a recalcitrant society has become dominant in the American legal academy and increasingly within the courts themselves. Most legal scholars, in one form or another, have embraced constitutional litigation as the ideal forum for moral evaluation of public policy. Rather than merely being the occasion for enforcement of a legal text by interpretation according to standards of law, the Supreme Court's exercise of judicial power to review the constitutionality of government decisions has become an opportunity for exploration of public virtue and national aspirations.

Michael J. Perry, a leading legal scholar, argues that judicial review should serve the role of "prophecy," calling us to a deeper understanding of ourselves through moral exhortation by the Supreme Court. Stanley Ingber, another prominent academic, envisions the Supreme Court as the "mediator" of a public dialogue, which he hopes will expand throughout society, but in which the Court holds the preeminent position in initiating and structuring a national discussion of fundamental values. Owen Fiss urges judges to avoid an "arid and artificial" focus upon the words and original meaning of constitutional provisions by instead reading "the moral as well as the legal text" of the Constitution. In sum, for most teachers in American law schools, constitutional law is seen as intertwined with moral philosophy, and court adjudication as the preferred venue for molding the American character.

In more recent years, the Supreme Court has lowered its profile and declined to encompass ever larger areas of public and private life within the realm of constitutional imperatives imagined and imposed by the courts. Most in the legal academy have decried this change in judicial attitude, arguing that the Court is abdicating its responsibility to reshape society and forge a national community based upon aspirational ideals.

Assuming the current trend in constitutional jurisprudence holds, we must ask whether such a course really is bad or whether it is a healthy development, reflecting a shift from a fixation on rights and judicial governance to democratic dialogue, political compromise, and discussion of values in a moral-cultural context. Should our society's dialogue about values proceed in the context of the Constitution, and more particularly, in the arena of constitutional litigation with primacy given to the courts as moral tutors?

In any event, it is far from clear that the Court truly has abandoned its arrogated role of national guidance counselor. The legal academy and its followers in the media appear to have a powerful influence upon the Court, especially given the apparent desire of the Court's justices to secure the praise of academic scholars and national reporters. Indeed, three justices in a deciding opinion recently asserted rather imperial authority, suggesting that the Court properly may instruct the public to defer to its resolution of a divisive issue and to follow loyally the path it has marked.

The Constitution is the framework of our national government and a guarantor of fundamental rights. But it is not the sole source of values or principles for us as a nation or as a people. A dialogue about fundamental constitutional values attendant to constitu-

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tional adjudication must be focused upon the Constitution as a legal text, and, because it is a legal text, the debate must be grounded in legal sources and legal analysis. We ask too much of the Constitution, and too little of ourselves, when we view it as the wellspring from which to draw comprehensive notions of public virtue or when we project onto it our aspirations as a national community.

The Supreme Court lacks the moral competence to promote a certain vision of American moral aspiration, rather than dutifully enforcing particular values already incorporated into our national charter. The judiciary lacks competence both in the sense of its authority to assume such an elevated role and in its qualification for and ability to carry out such a mission. As Michael Stokes Paulsen reminds us, "The legitimacy of the Supreme Court in our constitutional system rests not on its ability to fashion social and political compromises but on its ability to render decisions that the public readily can recognize as straightforward interpretations of a constitutional or statutory text." We do not choose the members of our judiciary because of their eminence as philosophers or their insight as moralists. Although each member of the bench properly dons the black robe of the judge, the white robe of the prophet ought to rest uneasily upon his shoulders.

Moreover, judicial adjudication skews moral discourse in a particular legalistic direction and suppresses the value of deliberation in other settings. Because constitutional debate is primarily the preserve of lawyers, dialogue in academic literature or constitutional litigation is conducted in a legal dialect that both distorts discussion of values and makes it inaccessible to the general public. While judicial review is vital to safeguard our constitutional freedoms, a degree of moral and philosophical discussion flowing from constitutional litigation cannot justify the costs that overreaching judicial rights declaration has for public debate and democratic governance.

Finally, moral discourse is too important to be captive to constitutional litigation or, for that matter, to governmental institutions, whether political or judicial. Our values as a people should not be constrained within the straitjacket of the Constitution. The Constitution serves the discrete purposes of establishing the framework for a limited government and for ensuring certain basic rights for individuals. It has little to say about most of the matters that should be important to us as individuals and as a community. Notwithstanding the growth of government and the proliferation of litigation, the center of life for most Americans remains with family, friends, and private groups—not political and legal institutions. Many of our social problems today demand a resurrection of values in a manner that cannot be compelled by constitutional command or legislative enactment.

I

A theory of constitutional law that may be out of fashion in today's legal academy, but that fits comfortably within the modern conservative and the traditional liberal views of the courts, begins with certain basic premises: the existence of law and the possibility of meaningful rules of law. It must recognize the Constitution as a legal text subject to legal interpretation by judges who derive their authority to render a judicial decree from the existence of the Constitution as a source of law. Whether one views constitutional interpretation as grounded in a theory of original meaning or the traditional liberal theory of judicial restraint and neutral principles, the distinctive nature of this approach is that it is legal in nature. One need not retreat into formalism, ignore the importance of practical wisdom, or deny the creative element in judging to insist that constitutional decision making be carefully bounded by the text, historical understandings, legal doctrine, and a modest view of the role of the judiciary.

A constitutional decision, both in outcome and reasoning, must be justified by reference to *legal* authority. John Hart Ely writes that the Supreme Court "is under an obligation to trace its premises to the charter from which it derives its authority" before it may make any constitutional pronouncement. The values espoused in a constitutional decree must be rooted in the Constitution, not in our hopes and aspirations for a better society. Judicial decision making calls for wise employment of that singular form of human thought known as legal reasoning. We do not ask our Courts to engage in capacious moral or philosophical inquiry. As Judge Learned Hand once observed, we have not anointed the Justices of the Supreme Court to rule us as a "bevy of Platonic Guardians."

There is no reason to assume that judges possess sufficient knowledge and virtue to undertake a mission of moral evaluation through the episodic venues of cases and controversies. The democratic process of political institutions accountable to the people is not so hopelessly imperfect that the preceptorship of the courts is preferable. The perception of the average American, however simplistic or formalistic the legal academy may regard it, remains that the judge's vocation is the neutral application of established rules of law. Americans would not long respect or tolerate a Court that forthrightly assumed the position of national moral guidance counselor. If the Court were truly to undertake the charge of serving as our national conscience, then the Court would simultaneously lose its legitimacy as a court of law.

What then is the purpose of constitutional review? When the constitutional mandate is sufficiently clear from the text, the understanding of the framers, or the structure of constitutional govern-

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ment, it removes certain matters from popular control and majoritarian rule. The Constitution is designed to be a trump card. When the Constitution speaks, the Court should amplify that sound loudly and with a commanding voice. When the Constitution is silent, the Court likewise should remain silent. If we free the Supreme Court from its bondage to a strict legal interpretation of the Constitution and those values articulated in that document, then the Court has lost its lawful authority to speak and we have lost our legal obligation to listen. Reasonable judges, legal scholars, and lawyers will hear the voice of the Constitution differently. But we must be listening with *legal* attention—not with the expectation of hearing the answer to our hopes and aspirations.

The role of the judiciary in constitutional review is to determine the substantive principles incorporated in the document for application to concrete individual controversies, while avoiding as far as possible an evaluation of the wisdom or desirability of the government policies at issue. Opposing views of right and wrong are best addressed and accommodated in a democratic political debate, with the judiciary serving the vital but secondary role of ensuring that basic rights are protected to prevent oppression of minorities by majoritarian rule. The absence of a constitutional right, and thus of a judicial remedy, does not dictate a narrow or limited vision of a moral society. Rather, it means that recourse must be made to the political process—or beyond to the moral and cultural realm of our community.

There is, after all, one other individual right too often neglected by modern constitutional scholarship—the right of democratic self-government. Our revolutionary founders fought for the right to elect their own representatives to make laws by democratic means. This right of democratic choice and the responsibility of democratic governance is not promoted by judicial imperialism, even if justified as showing some responsiveness to popular sentiments or public virtues.

Critics in the legal academy find democratic government inattentive to their view of fundamental values and failing in the mission of national community building. In contending for the preeminent position of the judiciary, they provide a troubling inventory of the imperfections of democracy, defects that we should soberly consider whenever looking to political institutions for answers to difficult moral questions. Nevertheless, as John Hart Ely concludes, "We may grant until we're blue in the face that legislatures aren't wholly democratic, but that isn't going to make courts more democratic than legislatures." Reciting the imperfections of democracy does not lead ineluctably to the conclusion that the least accountable branch of the federal government is the better forum for our national debate about public values. The political branches are forthrightly empowered to reconstitute society; the courts are limited to adjudication of discrete cases or controversies. The political branches are intended to be accountable; the judiciary is not. The members of the political branches are subject to electoral removal; the judiciary is not.

James Bradley Thayer warned nearly a century ago that "common and easy resort" to judicial review would tend "to dwarf the political capacity of the people, and to deaden its sense of moral responsibility." An ambitious vision of the Supreme Court and constitutional judicial review as serving the ends of public virtue is without legal justification, except as bound tightly to the values incorporated into our national charter. Even if legitimate, moreover, judicial supremacy inhibits, rather than promotes, general moral discourse about community values and aspirations.

II

Alexander M. Bickel once described Supreme Court decisions as "the beginnings of conversations between the Court and the people and their representatives." He acknowledged that they were "never, at the start, conversations between equals," given that the "Court has an edge" because it initiates the discussion with "some immediate action." Nevertheless, he insisted, "conversations they are."

To say that the Court has an edge in the conversation is an understatement. The "immediate action" to which Bickel refers is, of course, the judicial *decree*. We may embrace the Court's pronouncement as the articulation of public virtue and accept its declaration into our public conscience, or we may express abhorrence at the Court's edict and seek to avoid and overturn its decision as wrong and unacceptable. But, for the moment, we must live with it. A judicial decree is not a suggestion or an invitation to a conversation, as every litigator soon discovers. Moreover, the Supreme Court's declaration of constitutional law is binding upon the entire polity. As Judge Frank H. Easterbrook says, "Everyone must dance to the judges' tune whether party to the litigation or not."

By its decisions, an imperial Supreme Court may choose which values to elevate and commend to public approval and which values to denigrate as unworthy of further consideration. The clearest example of a deliberate adoption of one value at the expense of another, a judicial resolution that continues to distort public choice and moral discourse, may be found in the 1973 abortion decision of *Roe v. Wade*. This decision announced a generalized and fundamental right to privacy, encompassing the power to undertake conduct with significant social and moral ramifications. The *Roe* decision created an absolute right to abortion during the first trimester of pregnancy and allowed only for very limited regulation of abortion even late in pregnancy.

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Although the Court purported to avoid "the difficult question of when life begins," the nature of the decision effectively answers that question. The Court's aggressive withdrawal of protection from fetal life appears to resolve the question of when human life begins. Justice Byron White wrote in dissent that the Court elevated the value of individual autonomy over the value of the "continued existence of . . . life or potential life," while simultaneously pretending not to make such a choice and failing to demonstrate a constitutional warrant for preferring one value over the other.

By transforming abortion from a controversial and complex moral and political question into a constitutional entitlement, *Roe v. Wade* bestowed upon abortion the status of a positive good. It withdrew from the supporters of liberal abortion laws the obligation to frame an ethical justification, beyond absolute claims of personal control and an extremely isolated view of individual autonomy. As a fundamental right, abortion is inherently justified. For many years following *Roe*, most of those who supported liberal access to abortion would simply cite the Supreme Court's ruling and regard that reference as obviating any need to discuss the morality of abortion or consider the social impact of hundreds of thousands of abortions performed annually. Only when the pro-life movement appeared to be succeeding did the pro-choice movement become energized and outspoken in defending the right to an abortion on political grounds, although even now it tends to avoid discussing the ethical dilemma underlying abortion.

Most Americans seem uncomfortable with a climate in which, as Jo McGowan puts it, "the destruction of unborn children is acceptable." They regret the moral side-effects of a regime of abortion-on-demand: irresponsibility in sexual conduct, evasion of obligations by putative fathers, devaluation of children, and intolerance for the dependent, "inconvenient" members of our society. By framing abortion as a nearly unqualified constitutional right, without fully considering the claims of fetal life, we have not taken a stride to a more virtuous society. Instead, we have done great harm to our sense of community and responsibility and respect for human life. Mary Ann Glendon asks us to consider "what a set of legal arrangements that places individual liberty or mere lifestyle over innocent life says about, and may do to, the people and the society that produces them."

The Supreme Court, by loosening the rigid structure of *Roe* in recent decisions and approving legislative attempts to ensure informed consent and familial participation, has restored some measure of democratic dialogue to the abortion debate. Nevertheless, the Court continues to adhere to the core holding of *Roe* establishing a fundamental right to elective abortion prior to viability. Indeed, in the 1992 decision of *Planned Parenthood v. Casey*, three justices in the majority characterized their decision to preserve *Roe v. Wade* as a principled refusal "to surrender to political pressure," arguing that "to overrule under fire" would threaten the continued legitimacy of the Court. Thus, the very attempt of the people to engage in moral disputation with the Court and to challenge the legitimacy of an earlier decision was taken as proof of the need to maintain cloture on debate. The Court held onto the basic *Roe* formulation for the express reason that to do otherwise would suggest that they listen to and could be moved by moral dialogue.

In a particularly disturbing passage in the *Casey* opinion, the three deciding justices deliberately adopted the role of moral prophecy for a stubborn and recalcitrant people. They proclaimed that the loyalty of the American people to constitutional ideas would be "tested" by following the Court's resolution of the abortion controversy. The urgings of the legal academy to assume an exalted position as national moral tutor appear to have been heeded, even by a purportedly conservative Supreme Court.

If the right to abortion announced by the Supreme Court in *Roe* and adhered to in *Casey* were truly grounded in the text or history of the Constitution rather than reflecting what Justice White termed an "exercise of raw judicial power," moral qualms would provide no basis for avoiding the constitutional directive. I do not expect to find my moral philosophy codified in the Constitution, and others may find the moral claim of fetal life outweighed by compelling interests of equality and individual autonomy. But if we are to have a lively and fully textured exploration of matters of moral seriousness, both sides of the debate must figure in the calculation. By pointedly neglecting one side of the issue, *Roe v. Wade* stands as an obstacle to meaningful moral deliberation. Moreover, this was an occasion upon which the Constitution was silent. The Court thus lacked any warrant for projecting its commanding voice into the moral discourse about abortion.

Litigation is not a friendly forum for a balanced discussion of the wide range of values and concerns relevant to disposition of a public issue. Constitutional litigation and adjudication force communication along a narrow path, for the focus of legal advocacy is upon rights and wrongs. The values of responsibility, respect for others, and moral character are largely missing from what Professor Glendon calls the "rights talk" of the courtroom. The adversarial process encourages a winner-take-all attitude and suppresses compromise and accommodation.

The Supreme Court itself has hardly been immune to the centrifugal tendency to adopt extreme characterizations of opposing positions, as evidenced by the readiness to label legislative decisions with which the Court disagrees as "irrational," "prejudiced," "invid-

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ious," "suppressive," and "defiant." Robert F. Nagel remarks that we "legal academics have been so busy applauding the judiciary's theoretical capacity for elevated dialogue and sensitive moral decision making that we have not much noticed the tenor of much of what the judges have actually had to say." By moving beyond legal reasoning to resolving questions of moral and political values, the Court loses the characteristics of impartiality and independence from politics that are fundamental to its legitimacy.

Moreover, the forum of the courtroom and the language of the law are alien and alienating to the average person. By granting preeminence to the courts, we close the door on those who do not have access to the legal process and, in a practical sense, to those who do not possess a degree in law. Constitutional litigation by its nature is exclusionary. To participate effectively in a constitutive dialogue carried on in the venue of the courts, one must be a member of the priestly class of our civil religion: a lawyer or someone with a large measure of legal knowledge.

"Just as legal language is different in kind from ordinary language," Frederick Schauer suggests, "constitutional language may be different in kind from other legal language." The dialogue of constitutional litigation is thus twice removed from the ordinary discourse of the people. Granting the Supreme Court supremacy in conducting discourse about values through the mechanism of judicial review disempowers the people from full participation in their government and their communities.

The authentic voice of the people may be heard in their homes, neighborhoods, churches, synagogues, and voluntary organizations. The people do not speak in the language of the law; they do not talk of texts, precedents, doctrine, multi-pronged tests, or the balancing of factors. Instead, they speak of affection, moral duty, and commitment, as well as of needs and rights. We need to encourage and strengthen their voice, not by more and better Court decisions or laws, but by removing the impediments to involvement in the community. The neighborhood picnic and the school meeting are more important than the test case. The democratic vision offers, Robert A. Dahl writes, the hope "that by engaging in governing themselves, all people, and not merely a few, may learn to act as morally responsible human beings."

III

The Constitution is an inspired and inspiring document. The framers and ratifiers intended it to be a permanent text, establishing fundamental and immutable principles for republican government. Even this sacred blueprint of national values, however, sketches only a part of the cathedral of moral discourse in America. Stephen L. Carter warns that we must not fall into the error of speaking "as though the Constitution and the decisions explicating it constitute the whole of public morality."

More important, the question is not only whether to choose between the legislature and the judiciary in making value choices, but also whether law and politics—particularly law and politics emanating from the national centers of government—should play such a predominant role in moral discourse. The heart and soul of American life remains in what Professor Glendon calls the "law-free spaces, where social life is left to the regulation of norms other than those of state-guaranteed law."

The preeminent role that leading legal scholars would grant to the courts—and thus to the state—to define social values would undermine the value-constitutive role of intermediary institutions. As often as it has been a friend, government has been an adversary of mediating structures. Law and politics have expanded to fill every nook and cranny of society, crowding out the moral-cultural realm of our lives and displacing associational and family initiative. Public assistance programs discourage individual and familial responsibility while simultaneously shielding self-destructive behavior from the sanction of economic consequences. Busing of school children to promote racial balance in classrooms removes children from their neighborhood schools and destroys a sense of community. Officious social engineers of both the right and the left abuse the public schools to promote parochial agendas, whether by sanctioning the recitation of prayers over the school loudspeaker or by the distribution of contraceptives despite parental objections, thereby undermining parental authority and impairing the ability of parents to form their own family values. When government then attempts to respond to the social problems caused by the breakdown of private intermediary institutions, its new programs invariably weaken traditional structures further and make matters in some important respects worse. Government social policies, according to Nathan Glazer, are "making no steady headway against a sea of misery."

Family and community may be experiencing a revival today—despite, not because of, government policy. The yearning for community may be reflected in the revival of cities in the American heartland, where neighborhoods survive and private society thrives. A sense of community has been restored when residents of urban neighborhoods have been given responsibility for improving their own lives and a voice about decisions in their communities. As members of the baby boom generation become parents, they have returned to church with their children. Significantly, however, the liberal mainline Protestant churches, which had grown to resemble and imitate the surrounding secular society, have declined in membership while growth continues in the evangelical and Catholic churches that have created communities of deeply shared meaning. There is an increasing consensus about the value of intact

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two-parent families, together with an understanding of the social risks posed by increases in births outside of marriage. Although family planning experts still scoff, abstinence programs sponsored by private organizations and churches have successfully reached hundreds of thousands of teenagers, who are learning the reward of postponing sex and avoiding pregnancy.

This revitalization of values and community is not proceeding from a creative and exciting new program devised by the best and brightest in the federal government or from a judicial edict issued by the Supreme Court. Rather, at the grassroots level, we are seeing new strength in and appreciation of local communities and private intermediary institutions.

The Constitution begins with the words, "We the People of the United States." We, the People, still grow up in families, live in neighborhoods, attend local schools, and belong to churches, synagogues, and voluntary organizations. It is here, in our local communities, that we must nourish values and a sense of belonging. It is here, where the moral bonds of voluntary attachment have not yet been stretched beyond the breaking point, that true moral discourse can be maintained, especially, as Michael W. McConnell says, "over the highest things—matters of ultimate truth and value." It is here that we must seek and realize our aspirations for the future. FT

The Gods

The Gods made Art and Poetry and they
All died within the memory of Men
We tried and failed to find fresh things to say
So dug them up and buried them again.

In chiselled verses chaste as Ancient Greek
And enigmatic as the pyramids.
Myth and Allusion played at hide-and-seek,
Something about the workers and the yids,

Something about a secret that the Low,
The festering filthy and the filthy rich,
Will never understand, will never know.
Who's in, who's out, what's what and which is which,

Something about the Blood, The Mystery,
Madness and Myth and Ambiguity.

John Whitworth

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Review Essay

Getting Satan Behind Us

Jeffrey Burton Russell

The Origin Of Satan. By Elaine Pagels. *Random House. 214 pp. $23.*

Elaine Pagels, Professor of Religion at Princeton, is a distinguished scholar of Gnosticism and of the Nag Hammadi texts in particular. She is the author of a number of books, notably the well-known *Gnostic Gospels* (1979) and *Adam, Eve, and the Serpent* (1988). *The Origin of Satan* is literate, felicitous, and a pleasure to read, its open and accessible style in contrast to the jargon-choked jungles of modern academic prose.

Pagels' thesis is that from its origins in the Gospels onwards, Christianity has demonized its opponents. Christians demonized "their opponents—first other Jews, then pagans, and later dissident Christians called heretics. This is what this book is about." Explicitly treating only the first three centuries of Christianity, Pagels nonetheless points out the evil effects of demonization down to the present. Her interpretations of the Gospels are debatable, but she is right that by casting opponents of the Prince of Peace as adherents of the Prince of Evil, Christians forged a tool that many would wield clumsily, cruelly, and sinfully. One could go farther than Pagels and say that the tendency to demonize opponents is something that every Christian and every Christian congregation needs to repent and resolve to correct.

But the thesis is not only undebatable; it is also well established in scholarship and even in general knowledge. Pagels attempts to reach beyond a scholarly audience to general readers, and there may be some readers for whom the obvious needs to be stated again. But it is characteristic of this book that the author repeatedly presents hoary ideas as if she herself (or very recent scholarship) had just discovered them.

Pagels' thesis carries with it a number of questionable corollaries (though the smooth flow of prose almost disguises them), including the notion that Christianity's distinction between good and evil makes it a dualist religion; that Christianity practically invented demonization and is practically unique in using it; and that demonization is an essential element in historical Christianity with its contrast between this evil age and the age to come.

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The thesis and its development throughout the book are not what the scholar or the general reader would expect from the title, the opening paragraph, or much of the publicity. Given Pagels' own recent loss of her son and husband, readers might expect her to confront the issue of what she calls "misfortune and loss." This problem, however, though obviously related to the problem of evil (and by extension the problem of Satan), is met head on only in a few pages of the Introduction where Pagels says that "what fascinates us about Satan is the way he expresses qualities that go beyond what we ordinarily recognize as human. Satan evokes more than the greed, envy, lust, and anger we identify with our own worst impulses, and more than what we call brutality, which imputes to human beings a resemblance to animals ('brutes'). Thousands of years of tradition have characterized Satan instead as a spirit." Except for that curiously dismissive "instead," she is correct. "Evil, then," she continues, "at its worst, seems to involve the supernatural—what we realize, with a shudder, as the diabolic inverse of Martin Buber's characterization of God as 'wholly other.'" But she leaves it at that. What is evil? Is it an illusion in a world whose harmony is hidden but real? Or an illusion because all is relative? Or is it real? Pagels quells such questions with the word *yet*: "Yet—historically speaking, at any rate—Satan . . . did not materialize out of the air." But surely no contradiction exists between an historically conditioned idea of Satan and the ahistorical existence of radical evil itself.

For Pagels, Christianity is responsible for the dualism that underlies the demonization that she rightly deplores. "During the past several years, rereading the Gospels," she writes, "I was struck by how their vision of supernatural struggle both expresses conflict and raises it to cosmic dimensions." Her "research" may have first revealed such disturbing aspects of Christianity to her, but every student of the Gospels for twenty centuries already knew about them. Biblical scholars will have difficulty throughout the book. The social context of the Gospels, the chronological succession of Mark, Matthew, Luke, and John, and other assumptions that she uses as bases for argument are much less secure than the reader would assume without encountering an admission in the notes.

Pagels grants that "conflict between groups is, of course, nothing new," but she follows this with the statement that "what may be new in Western Chris-

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tian tradition . . . is how the use of Satan to represent one's enemies" leads to a division between God's people and God's enemies. There is no reason here to distinguish the "Western" from the Eastern Christian tradition. And the claim that this is new in Christianity is puzzling, for the contrast between the allies and enemies of a deity is common in Mesopotamian religion, the Hebrew Bible (Old Testament), Jewish Apocalyptic, the Essenes, Mazdaism, and Gnosticism—all of which were either earlier than or contemporary with Christianity. Moreover, in the two centuries before and after Christ, virtually all sides (including the Apocalyptic Jews and the Gnostics) linked their opponents with Satan: Gnostics, for example, saw both Jews and Christians as pawns of the evil Old Testament God who created the material universe.

To make Christians seem the originators of demonization, Pagels inverts her first two chapters chronologically. Chapter One, "The Gospel of Mark and the Jewish War," begins the study of demonization with one of the Gospels; only in Chapter Two, "The Social History of Satan," does she treat works of Jewish Apocalyptic that mostly predate Mark. Though this book is written for a general audience, only towards the end of it does she clearly state that "the vision of cosmic struggle, forces of good contending against forces of evil, derived originally from Jewish apocalyptic sources."

Pagels argues that in order to explain how a Jew could become an enemy of the truth, Apocalyptic and Essene Jews invented tales of cosmic rebellion. These myths, she declares, enabled them to explain, "'How could one of *us* become one of *them*?'" It was this sort of question that led to the creation of the myth. For the Jews who turned against the truth were "against them—or (as they put it) against *God.*" Where, before, Jews condemned Gentiles, now they condemned Jews unfaithful to Torah. This explanation is true as far as it goes, but it does not address earlier Jewish thought. Condemnation of Jews unfaithful to the Covenant permeates the Old Testament, especially the Prophets, yet demonization does not occur there. Pagels sees two stages in Judeo-Christian thought: "The people" against outsiders, and the people against the unfaithful within their midst. In fact there are three: conflict between an ethnic community and outsiders, conflict within the ethnic community, and conflict within each person. Although she asserts that Essenes and Christians differ about evil, both have these three, and both deemphasize the first. Nor is this wholly a chronological development: witness the conflicts within Saul or David.

The Jewish Apocalyptic book of Jubilees "insists that every creature, whether angel or human, Israelite or Gentile, shall be judged according to deeds, that is, ethically." If Pagels is correct that Apocalyptic Judaism moved farther than before from the responsibility of "the people" as a whole toward personal moral responsibility, making it possible to condemn fellow Jews to an unprecedented degree, the movement away from taboo and ethnic salvation toward moral judgment was surely not entirely a bad thing.

The inversion of the first two chapters, along with the relatively short treatment Pagels gives to Judaism, may lead innocent or unwary readers to believe that demonization was a Christian invention. Though it cannot be Pagels' intention, this can lead readers to demonize Christianity itself: for example, Mary Gordon writes in her review of Pagels in the *Nation*, "In the Olympics of Comparative Atrocities, it is tempting to believe that Christianity gets all the gold." Apparently the silver and bronze (or merely honorable mention) go to Hitler, Mao, Stalin, Pol Pot, Genghis Khan, Ashurnasirpal II, and other non-Christians. Is the history of India, China, or Japan less depressing than that of the West? Other cultures dehumanize very efficiently without recourse to either Satan or Christianity.

This is key to the understanding of evil: dehumanization is not the invention of Christianity or of any other particular ideology, but a tendency in all societies and in each of us. Jean-Paul Sartre pointed out that people everywhere, by defining "the other" as bad, secure for themselves the definition of "good" without having to work at the good themselves. This, for Sartre, was "bad faith." The illusion that we would somehow be good people if we were not perverted by Christianity (or Marxism, or Islam, or Nazism, or Freudianism, or Capitalism, or whatever you dislike) is the greatest block to understanding evil; indeed, it is the source of the demonization that Pagels decries.

Since Pagels argues that Christianity was a demonizing force from the very outset, she examines the Gospels in detail in chapters one, three, and four. Her argument is that the dualism between good and evil, which produces demonization, is first present in Mark and then gradually intensifies through Matthew and Luke to John. The development that she assumes from Mark to John takes us, she claims, farther and farther away from "history," by which she seems to mean "what really happened," a subject that she has already excused herself from attempting to determine. Pagels' understanding of the consensus of biblical critics as a whole is accurate and up to date. But along the way are some arresting observations.

Citing Luke 22:3, Pagels states that "Luke then says what Mark and Matthew imply—that the devil returned in person in the form of Judas Iscariot to destroy Jesus." The idea that people, however evil, are not humans but incarnations of Satan (just as Christ is the incarnation of God) is Pagels' own. What Luke really says is, "Then Satan entered into Judas: *eisêlthen de Satanas eis 'Ioudan,*" quite differ-

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ent from returning in the form of Judas. From Pagels' reading, one might conclude that Luke believed that evil persons are not human at all, that they have no free will. This would certainly be an obstacle to understanding evil, but there is no evidence that Luke or any other Christian writer intended this. The evangelist John, the author says, "dismisses the device of the devil as an independent supernatural character. . . . Instead, as John tells the story, Satan, like God himself, appears incarnate, first in Judas Iscariot, then in the Jewish authorities as they mount opposition to Jesus, and finally in those John calls 'the Jews'—a group he sometimes characterizes as Satan's allies." But if John did not believe in the Devil as an independent spiritual character, how could he "enter into" Judas, much less be incarnate in him? Although it is obvious and explicit in John that he considers the Jews rejecting Christ as minions of Satan, he in no way views either them or Judas as incarnations of the Devil.

Pagels' peculiar understanding of incarnation appears in other contexts, too. Christians, she says, saw the Passion of Christ not as a "final defeat [of Satan] but only a preliminary skirmish in a vast cosmic conflict." This would render the Incarnation, the central point of Christianity, virtually meaningless, as she seems later to understand when she says that Christians believe that "Christ has already won the decisive victory."

Sometimes Pagels' explanations only make things more difficult. "I am not saying that the Gospel accounts are essentially Manichaean in the ordinary sense of the term, that they envision good and evil evenly matched against each other." To imply that the Gospels are in any way Manichaean is anachronistic (the Manichaeans postdate the Gospels by nearly two hundred years). And not even the Mazdaists or the Gnostics or the Manichaeans, let alone the Gospel writers, believed that good and evil were equally powerful: all assumed that at the end of time good would triumph over evil.

Still, Pagels' excursions eventually lead back to some painful Gospel texts, such as John 8:44. Here Jesus says that his opponents "are from your father, the Devil." Pagels warns that Jesus is obviously not making "a simple ethnic distinction, since, of course, . . . Jesus and all his disciples are Jews." In fact Jesus is not making an ethnic distinction at all. His (or John's) concern is with unbelief, not ethnicity. Nonetheless she is right that John is demonizing Christ's opponents, and the passage has usually been read perniciously and antisemitically by Christians over two millennia.

Paul, recently belabored as politically incorrect by those who read only selected passages, unexpectedly appears in this book as a proponent of moral relativism. Pagels sees him as an opponent of the dualism and demonization that she finds in the Gospels, citing 1 Corinthians 8-9 to show that Paul "considers himself, because of his own *gnosis*, free" to do "whatever he likes," though "since not everyone has this *gnosis*," he voluntarily relinquishes this freedom. But Paul means by *gnosis* simple understanding, not secret illumination. What Paul really argues is that the law of love supersedes the love of law. Like Christ, Paul advises acting in charity for others even when to do so may breach a rule of the law. The law, Paul believed, is made for humans rather than humans for the law. Earlier, Pagels quotes Romans 8:28: "All things work together for good." This does not mean, however, that Paul did not believe in sin or evil, but rather that he trusted divine providence to work it out. Whatever Paul may have been, that he was no moral libertarian is patent in his writings, as, for example, 1 Corinthians 10:23 shows.

Pagels perceives Paul as the relativist precursor of the Valentinian *Gospel of Philip*, which proposes, she says, "an alternative to the common Christian perception of good and evil as cosmic opposites." This is puzzling, not only because Paul was not a relativist, or because Valentinus himself believed in a cosmic conflict between good and evil, but also because it is scarcely possible to speak of "a common Christian perception" in the second century owing to the rich diversity of beliefs that Pagels discovers in early Christianity (though Walter Bauer had discovered it half a century earlier). The *Gospel of Philip*, she says, identifies the tree of the knowledge of good and evil as the Law, which has been created by the evil Spirit. But here Paul and *Philip* are quite at odds, for it is only rigid adherence to the Law that Paul attacks, whereas *Philip* perceives the Law as intrinsically evil.

For Pagels, *Philip* is properly concerned with ethical questions in the sense of "how to reconcile the freedom *gnosis* conveys with the Christian's responsibility to love others," rather than the "ordinary dichotomy between good and evil." "The author of *Philip* wants to throw away all the lists of 'good things' and 'bad things'—lists that constitute the basis of traditional Christian morality." But there was as yet no traditional Christian morality in the early second century, and certainly no "lists." *Philip*'s point, she thinks, is "to show that one cannot distinguish good from evil in such simple and categorical ways." But few if any early Christian theologians had "simple and categorical" ideas of good and evil, with some possible exceptions such as Tertullian (whose own orthodoxy is questionable). The spiritual and psychological sophistication of Origen, or of Evagrius and other desert fathers, is profound and complex.

To understand what is going on, it is necessary to examine both orthodox and Gnostic attitudes in the second century. Pagels' research was in Gnosticism, and it paved the way for her well-known *Gnos-*

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tic Gospels. There she argued that the diversity of early Christianity was ended when during the second century bishops such as Ignatius, Irenaeus, and Clement of Rome had obtained enough power to drive the Gnostics out of the Christian community. Their primary reason for doing this was that the Gnostics, with their emphasis on internal illumination, rejected episcopal authority. Pagels' interpretation follows the current tendency to reduce all motives to power, though she does grant that the bishops' actions, however politically motivated, were "based on their beliefs about God." The picture of an established orthodox community driving out dissenters misses the dialectic of belief, as though the early church were somehow "Established" from the beginning instead of having to struggle its way toward a viable theology and organization.

To suggest that bishops and theologians rejected the Gnostics simply for reasons of power begs the very question that Pagels claims to address in *The Origin of Satan*: namely, the question of dualism. The Gnostics have been "in" the past few years, largely owing to Pagels' view of them as spiritual libertarians. Many varieties of Christian Gnosticism existed in the first two centuries, but most had in common an extreme dualism. For most Gnostics, a cosmic struggle is in progress between the good Lord of Spirit and the evil Lord of Matter. All matter is the creation of the Devil. Consequently, the Creator God of the Old Testament is not the good Lord at all, but Satan himself.

Of all matter the human body is the most evil, for Satan's ploy is to seize the souls created by the good Lord and entrap them in gross human flesh. Sexual intercourse is evil, especially intercourse leading to procreation, for the conception of a child is a victory in Satan's plan to imprison souls. Only those who have received the revealed knowledge that matter is evil can be saved, and only one of three groups of human beings, the *pneumatikoi*, is endowed with the ability to receive this gnosis: for the *psychikoi* there is little hope and for the *hylikoi* or *sarkikoi* there is none. The Jews and the orthodox Christians, who worship the Creator God, are doomed servants of Satan (a point Pagels admits in *The Gnostic Gospels*). And since the body is evil, the Incarnation of Christ is an illusion: He took on the mere *appearance* of human form in order to communicate with us, to announce the secret *gnosis*.

Pagels is consistent in her emphasis upon power. She said in *The Gnostic Gospels* that "*Gnosis* offers nothing less than a theological justification for refusing to obey the bishops and priests." But is it not probable that both the Gnostics and the bishops really, on the whole, believed what they said they believed in? One is reminded of the quaint early twentieth-century Marxist interpretations of heresy as social rebellion on the part of people too naive to know that their real grievances were economic.

The continuity between Pagels' position in *The Gnostic Gospels* and that in *The Origin of Satan* seems to be that the orthodox unfairly drove the Gnostics out and demonized them. Yet there is a contradiction between sympathizing with the Gnostics on the one hand and on the other blaming the orthodox for dualism and demonizing. For if it is wrong to be demonizing dualists, then the Gnostics were more wrong than the orthodox. The Gnostics are forgiven for being strong dualists, but the orthodox are castigated for being milder dualists.

One did not always have to choose between being a dualist or a non-dualist. What existed in the early church was not a dichotomy, but a spectrum from absolute monism at one end (where all that happens is the will of one omnipotent deity) to absolute dualism on the other end (where there are two equal deities, one good and the other evil). The great variety of Gnostic and orthodox theologies can be arranged on this spectrum. To understand this is to avoid blaming any group for dualism and demonization and to recognize that all these thinkers were trying to deal, to the best of their abilities, with the problem of evil itself.

In Chapter Five, "Satan's Earthly Kingdom: Christians against Pagans," and Chapter Six, "The Enemy Within: Demonizing the Heretics," Pagels describes how the demonization of Jews by the earliest Christians was translated into demonization of pagans. For Christians, as for Jews, there was only one God. The gods of the pagans, therefore, must be either illusions or demons. Not only did the Roman pagans worship illusions or demons, but they insisted that Christians join them in doing so. Christians perceived this as an evil, a great obstacle to Christ's work through his community on earth. "A hundred years after the Gospels were written, then, Christians adapted to the circumstances of pagan persecution the political and religious model they found in those Gospels—God's people against Satan's people—and identified themselves as allies of God, acting against Roman magistrates and pagan mobs." Had Christians been more tolerant, they would have offered their pinch to Zeus, their oath to the Emperor. By their intolerant zeal, Christians brought about their own persecution. (This view is remarkably similar to that of some odd recent books blaming the Jews for anti-Semitism.) And in turn the persecutions convinced Christians even more that the Devil was working through the Roman pagan authorities.

Pagels appropriately begins her study of the church fathers with Justin Martyr, but she gives a long resumé of the standard account of Justin Martyr's life before coming to the brief point, which is that "Justin suddenly understood, as Paul had, that the forces that play upon a helpless humanity are neither human nor divine, as pagans imagined, but demonic." Justin may have thought the gods and other spirits were really demons, but neither Justin nor any

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of the other fathers regarded humanity as helpless; quite the contrary, Satan's power had been, and would always be, overcome by that of Christ. For Pagels' fear-haunted Justin, "The worst evil of all is to say that neither good nor evil is anything in itself, but that they are only matters of human opinion."

To the Christian division of the moral world between good and evil Pagels contrasts the Stoicism of Justin's contemporary, Marcus Aurelius, again commencing with a curiously long summary of Marcus' background. Marcus believed that all gods and *daimones*, "however chaotic or even conflicting they appear, are actually part of a single cosmic order." For Marcus, "we all are subject to these cosmic forces; the only question is whether we can submit ourselves to them with equanimity." There is "'neither good nor evil'; instead, all alike are simply part of 'nature's work.' . . . Marcus' primary article of faith, then, involves the unity of all being." This sort of view is certainly more palatable than Christianity to the dominant pragmatists and relativists of the 1990s.

Pagels contrasts the inclusive views of Marcus to those of Justin's pupil Tatian, who believed firmly in the demonic quality of the pagan gods. Yet Tatian emerges, despite Pagels, as having admirable qualities. "If I do not wish to comply with some of your customs, why am I hated, as if I were despicable?" she quotes him as asking, and at the end of the book she does observe that Christian dualism can occasionally produce heroism as well as bigotry. Though Pagels follows a consensus in blaming the fathers for the soul/body dichotomy, other historians have recently shown that it was neither so definite nor so pervasive as the standard model has had it (notably Caroline Walker Bynum in *The Resurrection of the Body*, reviewed by Robert L. Wilken in FIRST THINGS, October 1995).

Pagels' long discussion of the career of Origen, which includes the old canard about Origen's self-castration, has little point till she addresses his efforts to refute the pagan writer Celsus. She cites Celsus approvingly for maintaining that the Christian belief in Satan was dangerous and that Christians believe "as if there were opposing factions within the divine, including one that is hostile to God." But this was not at all the view of either orthodox or Gnostics, especially not of the orthodox, and most especially not of Origen, who may even have argued that all things and all personalities return in the end to the One Source.

Her treatment of Anthony of Egypt, the founder of Christian monasticism, is also puzzling. Anthony, she writes, "taught his spiritual heirs in monastic tradition to picture Satan as the most intimate enemy of all—the enemy we call our own *self*." In fact, though Anthony believed that the Devil could and did penetrate the mind with temptations, he never suggested that our own "self," soul, or whatever, can ever become the Devil, let alone *be* the Devil. This misunderstanding is connected with Pagels' belief that Judas was Satan incarnate.

Pagels treats Augustine of Hippo—the most influential, complex, and diverse of all Christian theologians—quite differently from Peter Brown's masterful *Augustine of Hippo* (1969). Brown clearly understood that Augustine was of all people most aware that the Antichrist or Satan operates through the evil inclinations within ourselves. Brown's subtle Augustine is scarcely recognizable in Pagels' *Adam, Eve, and the Serpent*, which made Augustine responsible for mind/body dualism, hatred of sex, misogyny, and other baneful ideas. Pagels' new book merely makes the statement that Augustine's theory of evil as privation was an argument that "evil and Satan do not exist." This misunderstands both the theory of privation and Augustine's beliefs about the Devil. "On this level," she continues, "orthodox Christianity does not diverge from monotheism." She is not here aiming at the Trinity but at the power of Satan. But since neither Augustine nor any other father argued that evil did not exist, or the contrary that Satan's power was equal to Christ's, no suspicion that Christianity departed from monotheism, at least on these grounds, can exist; even the Gnostics themselves did not go that far.

The author concludes the book by contrasting within the Christian tradition "the profoundly human view that 'otherness' is evil and the words of Jesus that reconciliation is divine." But the recognition of evil in no way conflicts with the reconciliation of love. Would it be loving to the Jews to pronounce that the Holocaust is not evil? Implicitly and tacitly Pagels appears to be under the influence of the relativist view that holds that Christianity is bad for not being relativist, that it has promoted evils such as demonization and misogyny, and that it ought to be constructed along lines that are pragmatically valuable today.

That Christians used texts such as John 8:44 to demonize opponents has always been clear. But the distinction between good and evil is common to all societies. It may be necessary and desirable; it is certainly universal. The consignment of opponents of dominant systems to the margins, or even thrusting them beyond the margins, is also universal; it is certainly undesirable, but it is not the invention of Christianity. It is why Creon killed Antigone. The belief in a personal leader of all evil, whether desirable or not, was common to Mazdaists, Gnostics, Apocalyptic Jewish writers, and Manichaeans, not only to orthodox Christians. Perhaps a universalist religion such as Christianity or Islam is more intolerant than others, but Japanese, Hindu, Chinese, and many other societies have not been marked by great tolerance. Even in the Roman Empire little peace and

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harmony, and certainly little unanimity, prevailed among those we lump together as Roman "pagans." In the context of Justin, Pagels asks, "But why does the mere mention of the Christian name arouse such violent, irrational hatred?"

Any ideology that distinguishes good from evil will arouse opposition and indignation. And the distinction does raise moral problems. "Such moral interpretation of conflict has proven extraordinarily effective throughout Western history in consolidating the identity of Christian groups; the same history also shows that it can justify hatred, even mass slaughter." This book seems to regard the discovery by the Jews that moral good and evil rather than taboo should govern actions as a setback to civility rather than an advance in ethical understanding. Is it then bad and destructive—hence, well, evil—to say that there is good and evil? Pagels addresses such questions only pragmatically: belief in evil has had bad consequences; therefore it does not work, and we ought not to believe it.

But by what standards do we judge bad consequences and what does not work? The Nazi elimination of almost all German and Polish Jews certainly "worked." Evading the deep moral questions left untouched by pragmatism can only be done at our peril. Pagels herself cannot, in the end, avoid them. If Saint Francis and Martin Luther King were good for believing "that they stood on God's side," what *is the other side*?

Bertrand Russell pointed out long ago that it is not the distinction between good and evil, but rather the relativism deriving from pragmatism, that makes moderns see everything through the lens of power. If we are not interested in truth, beauty, and the good, Russell observed, then what is left is power. Pragmatism is closely linked with the appeal to force. Russell argued that if the only way of discovering which disputant is in the right is to wait and see which of them is successful, there is no longer any principle except force (verbal as well as physical) by which the issue can be decided.

In intellectual circles today it is controversial to distinguish clearly between right and wrong, good and evil, because then one runs up against the cherished assumption of late-twentieth-century intellectuals that we humans are morally autonomous beings who have every right to act by our own standards. This belief floats, vaguely, somewhere above the logically preceding assumption that human nature is basically good. This popular, wacky assumption is original to post-Enlightenment Romanticism, and it goes against experience. Any explanation of the Holocaust or the Gulag must fail unless it confronts the problem of evil.

Whether the opponents of Christianity are evil or whether Christians themselves are evil (or both), the existence of radical evil is immediately plain to the direct moral intuition. It is a matter of deep personal and social concern that we learn to recognize it for what it is; if we do not, we shall have no way of controlling it. The first place to look in attempting to accept the reality of evil is within ourselves. We experience evil done by us and to us. The reality of evil can be denied only by denying the validity of universal experience. Pagels, in the end, does not condemn Christianity—indeed, she is a believer. Rather, she wants to remake Christianity, purging it of its distinctions between good and evil in favor of a congenial Stoic view that all apparent good and evil are part of a benign cosmos. The implication is that Christianity is not as it has historically been from the beginning. But how else can we know what Christianity is other than in its history? Pagels joins those who want to save it by remaking it in their own image and likeness. FT

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Review Essay

Lost in the Fifties

Mary Ann Glendon

The Lost City: Discovering the Forgotten Virtues of Neighborhood Life in the Chicago of the 1950s. By Alan Ehrenhalt. *Basic Books. 299 pp. $23.*

You have to give Alan Ehrenhalt, the editor of *Governing* magazine, credit for a lot of nerve. It's one thing to take on the job of sympathetically interpreting the 1950s, but *Chicago* of the 1950s? *Virtue* in the stormy, husky, brawling city of big shoulders and big payoffs? Come to think of it, Basic Books is pretty adventurous, too. Many a publisher might have passed on a book extoling the virtues of urban life under the reign of Richard the First (Daley, of course). There just aren't that many potential readers like Andrew Greeley, who once told an interviewer he imagined heaven as being something like Chicago in the time of "The Mayor."

To avoid misunderstanding, I must make clear that *The Lost City* does not portray the fifties as a golden age. But it does provide a wholesome corrective to accounts that dwell exclusively on the defects of that decade, with its lack of opportunities for women and minorities, and its cult of bourgeois domesticity. Ehrenhalt wisely observes:

> In drawing up our balance sheet for 1950s America, assessing the values and the costs, we do need to examine the holes in its assumptions of contentment. But that the contentment was real—and widespread—is a truth that needs to be remembered as well. . . . It is not the place of the historian and the critic to mock the comforts of ordinary people.

Critics have done yeoman work in exposing the ways in which elements of the fifties ethos fostered future adolescent rebellion. What they did not understand, Ehrenhalt claims, were "the small but hard-won satisfactions of the grownups who were grateful for a modicum of physical comfort after two rough decades." He seems right on the mark in his analysis of what the fifties meant to the generation that struggled through the Depression and survived World War II. For them, the period was one "when life as it was seemed so much better than life as it might have been."

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Though Ehrenhalt greatly adds to the understanding of a much-maligned city and decade, that is not his main aim. His voyage in time was undertaken primarily in quest of *political* knowledge. He returned to the fifties in search of insight regarding some urgent contemporary questions about how human beings order their lives together: What conditions are necessary in order to have such minimum elements of dignified living as safe streets, classrooms conducive to learning, and a reasonable degree of social stability? How are social cohesion (community) and legitimate leadership (authority) gained and lost?

Since Aristotle, those who ponder such questions have often looked to the past, or to the experience of other cities and states, for clues to what works, what fails, and what side-effects are associated with this or that arrangement. History and comparison are the laboratories of the social scientist. Faulty as that equipment is, we haven't got much else. Ehrenhalt, in that tradition, takes as his theater of observation three communities in the Chicago area as they were forty years ago, and as they are today. The result is a deeply challenging work of social criticism that, with the help of several well-chosen photographs, vividly evokes a time and place.

If you've ever entered Chicago at Midway Airport, chances are your taxi took you through the first of these neighborhoods—St. Nicholas of Tolentine Parish. St. Nick's lies in the "bungalow belt" on Chicago's Southwest Side, a vast expanse of low, solid, bay-windowed, five- or six-room brick dwellings in shades of beige and ochre. In the fifties, these were the dream houses of a diverse mixture of working-class Bohemian, German, Irish, Italian, Lithuanian, Polish, and Slovak families. Outwardly, the bungalows look much the same today as they did forty years ago, even to the ornamental lamps and plants in the front windows. What has vanished is the neighborhood-centered life that once buzzed around them—the shops where merchants and customers knew one another; the comings and goings between adjacent back yards; the activity in the streets that was "monitored during all the waking hours of the day by the informal law enforcement system of the neighborhood, the at-home mothers." The mothers had an important ally in watchful Monsignor Fennessy, who, for decades, "walked the neighborhood day and night, dressed in a black cassock that reached down to his shoe-tops . . . greet[ing] people on their front

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stoops, and hand[ing] out dimes to children." St. Nick's Church itself was mother to a host of associations and activities for men, women, and children. Its pre-Vatican II Latin liturgy was richly ceremonial; its masses well-attended; its parish school staffed with a full complement of nuns.

As it happens, I knew that neighborhood well. During the academic year 1956-57, I was a part-time reporter for its gung-ho weekly paper, the *Southwest News-Herald*. Five days a week, after class at the University of Chicago, I took the long bus ride to 59th and Kedzie, journeying, as through a space warp, from the Great Books to the great bake-offs. I spent many hours covering events in neighborhood churches, gymnasiums, and schools; and recording the births, weddings, achievements, mishaps, and deaths of Southwest-siders. Across the street from the *News-Herald* was a union hall where the Mayor himself would sometimes make a brief appearance, flanked by burly men in Robert Hall suits. The engines that kept that way of life humming were the churches, the unions, the locally owned businesses, and the unpaid labor of women. So far as I can tell, there is not a single false note in Ehrenhalt's recreation of that busy little world.

Today, the Southwest Side is a shell of its former self—with few stay-at-home parents, most of its local businesses bought up by distant corporations, and not one nun left in St. Nick's struggling parish school. Plant closings took their toll on the economic life of the community; divorce took its toll on families; and women's increased labor force participation deprived the schools and churches not only of their volunteers, but of interested close observers of their missions. Community seems to have evaporated. As for authority, Ehrenhalt writes, "Outside the province of the individual family, there are no noticeable figures of authority at all."

Eastward of St. Nick's, and centered on 47th and South Park Way, was the neighborhood once called Bronzeville. In the fifties, it was the heart of Chicago's South-Side ghetto, where most of the city's African-American population was crowded and kept in by de facto segregation. Ehrenhalt does not gloss over the conditions of squalor and limited opportunity that prevailed there. The fact that it was so difficult for blacks to move to other parts of the city, however, meant that middle-class people, "church ladies," stable families, and skilled and white-collar workers remained in the population mix. Bronzeville was the diverse, vibrant, suffering, struggling world whose gains and joys were portrayed by Lorraine Hansberry in her 1959 play *A Raisin in the Sun*. In Ehrenhalt's book, as in that memorable play, the Bronzeville of former times is presented as a place where, "however difficult the present might be, the future was worth thinking about and planning for in some detail."

The churches were Bronzeville's "most uniformly successful and self-reliant social institutions." Besides five churches with a seating capacity of two thousand or more, and two with over ten thousand members on their rolls, there were dozens of little store-fronts. The larger churches fostered elaborate networks of social groups and activities, and their ministers were the community's preeminent leaders. The leading clergymen, because they were beholden to no outside interests, were even more respected than the businessmen, the editor of the *Defender*, and William Dawson, the machine boss. Says Ehrenhalt, "They were the indispensable coordinators of the community."

Today, the physical structures of the Bronzeville neighborhood no longer exist. Most of its buildings were levelled—so that some of the country's worst public housing could be erected on the sites of what had been some of its worst slums. Like many other American cities, Chicago learned the hard way that bulldozed communities could not simply be "renewed." But even if urban renewal had not taken its toll, other social forces were irrevocably transforming the ghetto. For, as opportunities for better jobs and housing opened up, the black middle class moved away. Hardly anything now remains of the community whose "uniqueness depended on the presence of people from all classes with all sorts of values" living and working side-by-side. Only the churches survive in anything close to recognizable form, "struggling heroically against the social disorganization that is all around them." But, without the middle-class families and other community pillars, the churches have lost much of their authority. Their songs still ring out on Sunday, but their teaching voices have become fainter.

On the western outskirts of Chicago stands Elmhurst, the third and last stop in Ehrenhalt's quest. In the 1950s, many white middle-class families succumbed to the allure of the new, affordable homes that were sprouting in pastel profusion in places like Elmhurst. Returning veterans, salesmen, engineers, office managers—many of them the first in their families to attend college or to have white-collar jobs—liked the idea of raising their children outside the city. They and their wives were attracted by the airy open spaces and the novel "picture windows" that distinguished the modern split-level and ranch-style construction. As Ehrenhalt puts it, they moved "into houses and lives that seemed, even to them, almost too good to be true."

With hindsight, however, the dreams of those hopeful, mobile men and women of the fifties were constructed on exceptionally shaky foundations. The new arrivals, having left their roots and extended families behind, naively believed "that community was something they could simply recreate in the place they were moving to." *The Lost City* recounts

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the frenetic efforts they made to jump-start social life, and to foster neighborliness among people who happened to have bought houses next door to one another. One large group gave a high priority to founding a church that, like Baby Bear's bed, was not too hard, not too soft, but just right for the lifestyles suburbanites were in the process of inventing. The new church was long on social life, short on doctrine, and, for a time, it flourished.

Community, however, is as hard to create as it is to renew. The newcomers to Elmhurst had no shared memories. Indeed, their chief common characteristic was being a newcomer. In the beginning, they were aided by the presence in their midst of many men who had served in World War II. That experience made the veterans "almost a fraternal group," and gave them "confidence and authority as community leaders." But, as the country is now discovering, that kind of authority expires with the generation that earned it. Today, Elmhurst's busy two-job families have little time to nurture the structures and institutions of community. The church that figured so importantly in their lives forty years ago has suffered a massive membership decline.

As for authority in the family and the schools, Ehrenhalt makes a convincing case that it was already on the wane in the middle-class enclaves of the fifties. Popular magazines like *McCall's* and *Parents* were exhorting fathers to be friends and companions to their kids, not just distant breadwinners. Parents' lives revolved around children to an unprecedented degree. The ideal of "family togetherness" was symbolized by the architecture of the new homes with their large living rooms. Fathers still imposed rules and exercised discipline, but, Ehrenhalt perceptively observes, "they were beginning to doubt their own legitimacy in doing it, and they betrayed those doubts, and that made their efforts at authority seem all the more arbitrary and capricious." In that light, the generation that came of age in the sixties was not rebelling against domestic tyranny (as they claimed), so much as exploiting the vulnerability of a soft regime. Their parents undermined their own governments with good intentions.

Ehrenhalt's analysis of authority in the schools is similar. The Elmhurst teachers he interviewed remember feeling that their authority over what they saw as pampered kids was becoming precarious. Former students, for their part, recall the school atmosphere as intimidating. No contradiction, says Ehrenhalt. Insecurity will often cause a teacher, or a parent, to step up the volume. Today, he reports, the high school has abandoned the discipline that its students once resented, but it has also abandoned the belief in character-building that once gave educators their sense of purpose. Teachers, like many other authority figures in the 1990s, "not only have lost the ability to enforce standards of conduct, but any clear sense of what standards to enforce."

Even the yellow, pink, and aqua dream houses had a drawback. They were small structures whose vaunted living spaces were achieved at the price of cramped, thin-walled bedrooms. Suburban baby boomers thus had little privacy at home, were crowded together in schoolrooms, yet were treated as "special" by their earnest parents. Ehrenhalt sees in that state of affairs some of the "physical roots of hyperindividualism in the age that followed."

What does Ehrenhalt make of all this? His conclusions, like his descriptions, deserve to be read and pondered carefully. In brief, the main lesson he draws from his visits to St. Nick's, Bronzeville, and Elmhurst is this: In the moral, as in the economic, realm, there's no free lunch. The gains of the past forty years have been real, in terms of personal freedom, choice, and job opportunities, especially for women and minorities. But the losses have been real, too. In developing this theme, Ehrenhalt makes an important contribution to the understanding, not only of the fifties, but of the conditions for community and authority.

He recognizes that many readers will balk at his emphasis on the importance of "authority"—a word that, to his generation (he was born in 1947), has sinister connotations of arbitrariness and oppression. Nevertheless, he insists, "there is no easy way to have an orderly world without somebody making the rules by which order is preserved. Every dream we have about recreating community in the absence of authority will turn out to be a pipe dream in the end."

A major reason authority is currently in such bad odor, of course, is that the distinction between authority and authoritarianism was lost in the sixties. Since many readers will not appreciate that distinction, and because authority is such a key concept in Ehrenhalt's analysis, I wish that he had devoted some attention to the subject of how power earns and maintains its claim to acceptance and legitimacy. On the other hand, the strength of the book is in its detailed observations. The author was probably wise in his decision to keep explicit theorizing to a minimum.

The Lost City does, moreover, make a significant contribution to the understanding of one of the most perplexing problems of contemporary political theory: can liberal democratic experiments sustain a shared culture that will restrain human appetites without using oppressive force? His answer, though he does not put it quite this way, is affirmative—provided that liberalism does not attempt to transform every institution of civil society in its own image. As he sees it, the adults of the fifties—a critical mass of them—lived by an implicit bargain by whose terms lasting relationships were given priority over unfettered personal freedom and choice. "People stayed married to their spouses, to their political machines, to their baseball teams. Corporations also stayed

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married—to the communities they grew up with." That bargain gave us "communities that were, for the most part, familiar and secure; stable jobs and relationships whose survival we did not need to worry about in bed at night; rules that we could live by, or, when we were old enough, rebel against; and people known as leaders who were trusted with the task of seeing that the rules were enforced."

The price of that bargain was substantial—"a whole network of restrictions on our ability to do whatever we liked." But in repudiating the deal, we sacrificed many things that Americans still rightly regard as essential to the good life. We need to realize, he writes, that "privacy, individualism, and choice are not free goods and that the society that places no restrictions on them will pay a high price for that decision."

Ehrenhalt neither wishes, nor believes it is possible, to restore the families, neighborhoods, patterns of work and investment, schools, politics, and religion of a generation ago. The key question for him is whether we can "rebuild some anchors of stability" to help us through times of turbulence. Can we, he asks, "develop a majority culture strong enough to tell its children there are inappropriate ways to behave in a high school corridor? Is there a way to relearn the simple truth that there is sin in the world, and that part of our job in life is to resist its temptations?" To do so would require us to correct for the excesses of "a generation determined to keep permissiveness and unfettered self-expression at the top of its list of values—long after they [have] turned into corrosive forces for the society as a whole."

That's a tall order, but Ehrenhalt is cautiously sanguine about the answers to the questions he poses. He draws comfort from two other historical moments when community and authority were in crisis. The 1920s, he points out, were characterized by a vivid sense of lost community and authority, yet were followed by the extraordinary social cohesion and common effort of the Depression and war years. An even more interesting case, he argues, is England in the 1820s, a time of notorious disrespect for authority, with manners and beliefs profoundly unsettled by revolutionary ideas from France. Who could have foreseen, he asks, the Victorian era of reform and the revitalization of religion that followed?

But as Ehrenhalt surely knows, English and American civil society in the nineteenth and early twentieth centuries was thick with the sorts of communities of memory and mutual aid whose current decline he has so well documented. The social networks that sustained earlier generations are now hanging in shreds. The fact is that our current situation is historically unprecedented in ways that make it fanciful to look for a swing of the historical pendulum to restore conditions of orderly, dignified living. No solution is on the horizon, to take the most troubling example, for the socialization of what is very likely a critical mass of children, rich and poor alike, being raised in transient neighborhoods, with little parental supervision, in broken and reconstituted families where no arrangements or commitments seem permanent or reliable.

Ehrenhalt thus seems to be resisting his own data when he pins his hopes on "what the next generation grows up believing—the generation being raised by the creators of the deluge." The generation now coming of age faces a future in which their material prospects—as a group—are worse than those of their parents and grandparents. Ehrenhalt insists that to dismiss the idea that they will restore community and authority is to show "too little respect for the natural desire of any generation to correct the errors and excesses of the generation before." Desire, however, is one thing; ability another. And if the generation that has known so little order should move, as Ehrenhalt hopes, to reimpose it, there is another question to be asked. What sort of authority will they be able to imagine? What rough beast slouches toward the windy city to be born? FT

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Review Essay

The Atheism of the Gaps

Stephen M. Barr

Shadows of the Mind: A Search for the Missing Science of Consciousness. By Roger Penrose. *Oxford University Press. 457 pp. $25.*

Roger Penrose, the Rouse Ball Professor of Mathematics at Oxford, has gone a long way toward burying materialism, which is remarkable since Penrose is apparently a materialist himself. He is also a formidable mathematician and mathematical physicist who is perhaps best known for the Hawking-Penrose singularity theorems in General Relativity.

My impression is that the prevailing view in the scientific community is a thoroughgoing materialism which claims that all reality can be understood as the behavior of matter governed by the laws of physics. This is understandable. For several centuries science has cast its net ever wider to bring within its purview everything from the forging of the elements to the processes of life, from the explosions of stars to the visual system of the housefly. Just about everything you see around you is pretty well understood by science—and many things you cannot see. Is it any wonder, then, that given any object of curiosity many scientists view it as simply a matter of time before the physical explanation of it is found? It is this confidence in science, born of long and uninterrupted success, that underlies the claims of the new science of Artificial Intelligence. The human mind is considered by this science to be nothing other than the operation of the physical system called the brain, and the brain to be nothing other than a computer, albeit a very powerful and sophisticated one.

In *Shadows of the Mind*, however, Penrose says, in effect, "Not so fast." The human mind cannot be a computer, if by "computer" one means the computer as currently conceived. There are, he argues, mathematically demonstrable limitations to the kinds of things computers can do, and these limitations are not shared by the human mind. Penrose, as a good materialist, has faith nonetheless that the human mind is nothing other than a machine. But it must be, he endeavors to show, a machine of a radically new and as yet inconceivable kind.

There are two parts, then, to Penrose's argument, and two parts to his book. He argues negatively about what the mind cannot be. And he argues speculatively about what the mind might be.

The first part of Penrose's argument was originally developed, as he admits, in essentially the same form over thirty years ago by another Oxford professor, John Lucas. The Lucas-Penrose argument rests, in turn, on a profound and epoch-making theorem in mathematical logic proven by Kurt Gödel in 1930. It is generally recognized that this theorem is as fundamental and revolutionary in its implications as the discoveries of Newton, Einstein, and Heisenberg.

Gödel's work in mathematics begins with David Hilbert, who asked in 1900 whether mathematics could be completely "formalized." In such a formalization an exact and unambiguous language would be constructed in which every mathematical proposition would be expressible as a string of symbols, like "2 + 2 = 4." Legitimate ways of deriving one proposition from another would would be codified in a set of precise rules for manipulating these strings of symbols. To take a simple example, one such rule would allow the addition of the same expression to both sides of an equation, so that if "a = b" is a true proposition, then so is "a + c = b + c." If all mathematical reasoning could be so "formalized," then any proof, however deep or intricate, could be reduced to a form in which it could be checked mechanically (literally by a machine).

If this were possible, then computers could "think mathematically" just as human beings do, for mathematics would then be nothing but computation. (Of course Hilbert did not frame the issue in this way, as digital computers had not yet been invented.) What Gödel showed, however, and rocked the mathematical world by showing, was that mathematics could *not* be so mechanized. In particular, he demonstrated that if one is given any consistent formal mathematical system rich enough to include ordinary arithmetic, then there exist propositions (called "Gödel propositions") that (a) can be properly stated or formulated in the symbolic language of that system, (b) cannot be proven using the mechanical symbolic manipulations of that system, and yet (c) can nevertheless be proven to be true—by going outside the system. Because the human mind can grasp the structure of the formal system and the *meaning* of its symbols, it is able to reason about them in ways that are not codified within that system's rules. As Penrose says:

> One might imagine that it would be possible to list all possible obvious steps of reasoning once and for all, so that from then on everything could be reduced to computation—i.e., the

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> mere mechanical manipulation of these obvious steps. What Gödel's argument shows is that this is not possible. There is no way of eliminating the need for *new* "obvious" understandings. Thus, mathematical reasoning cannot be reduced to blind computation.

In proving his theorem, Gödel showed explicitly how to construct a "Gödel proposition" for any particular formal system.

The relevance of all this to computers is that all computers involve—indeed *are*—systems for the mechanical manipulation of strings of symbols (or "bits") carried out according to mechanical recipes called "programs" or "algorithms." Now suppose that there could be a computer program that could perform all the mental feats of which a man is capable. (In fact, such a program must be possible if each of us *is* in fact a computer.) Given sufficient time to study the structure of that program, a human mathematician (or group of mathematicians) could construct a "Gödel proposition" for it, namely a proposition that could not be proven by the program but that was nevertheless true, and—here is the crux of the matter—which could be *seen* to be true by the human mathematician using a form of reasoning not allowed for in the program. But this is a contradiction, since this hypothetical program was supposed to be able to do anything that the human mind can do.

What follows from all this is that our minds are *not* just computer programs. The Lucas-Penrose argument is much more involved than the bare outline I have just given would suggest, and many people have raised a variety of objections to it. But Lucas and Penrose have had little difficulty in showing the insubstantiality of these objections, and I think it is fair to say that their argument has not been dented. And yet, the argument Lucas and Penrose have made is so disconcerting to certain habits of thought that the reflexive response of many people is to say that it *must* be wrong. Science has conditioned us to expect the breakthrough, the revolution in thought, the astonishing new possibility. To say that machines will never think is as foolish as it was to have said that man would never fly. But science has shown us not only possibilities but limitations. We now know that we will not be able to break the light barrier as we have broken the sound barrier, or chemically transmute lead into gold.

Gödel himself seems to have understood quite clearly the implications of his remarkable theorem. (He said the idea that the mind is purely material is a "prejudice of our time.") But he did not draw out these implications in a clear philosophical argument. Lucas did so, but the fact that he was a professed Christian perhaps made it easier for the materialists to dismiss his arguments as the product of wishful thinking. Penrose, however, is that rare thing—a materialist who is not afraid to follow to the very end the implications of his materialism. And those implications are strong and specific.

Penrose establishes with admirable rigor that no machine that works "computationally" can think as we do. He then argues (convincingly) that all machines constructed using the known laws of physics will work computationally. And having assumed that the human mind is nonetheless entirely explicable by the laws of physics, he is forced to conclude that there must be new laws of physics involving processes that are intrinsically non-computational (which is not to say that they are not described by deterministic mathematical laws). These new laws must be relevant to how the brain functions, and when these laws are understood they will in some way explain how human beings are not only able to compute but to *understand.* This is a very tall order, as Penrose is fully aware. Indeed, at one point, after he has proven that it is an extremely strong kind of "non-computability" that must be involved in these new physical laws, he is driven to exclaim "no doubt there are readers who believe that the last vestige of credibility of my argument has disappeared at this stage." That there are as-yet-undiscovered laws of physics is a near certainty. But scientists generally believe that the laws of physics relevant to describing what is going on at the level of the brain, of neurons, of molecules and atoms, and indeed down to distance scales much smaller than the nuclei of atoms are well understood. And all the laws that we do know are, as Penrose himself argues, essentially "computational." This is not to say his speculations in the second half of his book on how the brain might work are without value. But his materialist assumptions have painted him into a very tight corner.

Something very significant is going on here. Many atheists imagine that religion is based on ignorance. Religion supplies irrational explanations where rational ones are lacking; as lightning, for example, is still thought by primitive people to be the raging of the gods. In this view, religion has been fighting a long rear-guard action against the advance of knowledge, taking refuge in the unknown and the obscure by positing a "God of the gaps," and, as the gaps in our rational explanation of the universe disappear, God will be driven out. This is indeed one of the main motivations for a certain kind of scientist who supposes that when the job of Science is done there will be no room left for the "superstition" of religious belief.

Penrose shows that materialism itself is now the faith of the "gaps." It is in the gaps of undiscovered and unprecedented "non-computational" laws of physics and of uninvented and so-far unimaginable non-computational thinking machines that the "missing science of consciousness" is forced to lurk. But what will happen if the gaps in our knowledge of

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physics are closed? What will happen if the laws of physics are known in their entirety and turn out not to have the characteristics that Penrose shows they must if they are to explain the mind of man? Then indeed will superstition be overthrown, the superstition of materialism.

Penrose is all the more effective in overthrowing materialism because that is not his aim. He obviously does not take seriously what he calls "mentalism," the view that there is something about mind not reducible to physical description or explanation. In Penrose's understanding, the nonmaterialist holds a view that "regards the mind as something that is entirely inexplicable in scientific terms." He calls it the "viewpoint of the mystic," for it involves a "negation of scientific criteria for the furtherance of knowledge." Moreover, he asks, "if mentality is something quite separate from physicality, then why do our mental selves seem to need our physical brains at all?" "It is quite clear," he goes on, "that differences in mental states can come about from changes in the physical states of the associated brains."

There are several misconceptions here. Materialism does not follow from accepting the scientific method; that something can be studied using the scientific method implies nothing a priori about how it is constituted. We can study both whales and neutrinos using the scientific method, but this implies neither that whales are made up of neutrinos nor neutrinos of whales. That we can study both matter and mind by scientific methods does not imply that the mind is entirely material. And neither do all "mentalists" aver that the mind is "entirely inexplicable in scientific terms." Rather, they say that it is "not entirely explicable in scientific terms"—not the same thing. Moreover, the issue is not whether the brain is *necessary* to our "mental selves," but whether it is *sufficient*. Finally, not all mentalists regard mentality as "quite separate from physicality." "The unity of soul and body is so profound," the *Catechism of the Catholic Church* declares, "that one has to consider the soul to be the 'form' of the body. . . . Spirit and matter, in man, are not two natures united, but rather their union forms a single nature."

What underlies this objection to "mysticism" is the view that religion is a rejection of rational explanations of reality. Mentalism is, Penrose thinks, "unscientific." One of the hallmarks of scientific explanation is that it leads to testable predictions. And some implications of mentalism are not only testable, but have to some extent already been borne out in spite of the fact that they strike the materialist as incredible. A mentalist prediction is that digital computers will never and can never reproduce human intellect, and Penrose claims (correctly, I think) to have proven this very point.

A second prediction of mentalism involves the mysterious question of how the mind and brain are related. Clearly, what is immaterial in the human mind can influence the physical world, or our acts of will and understanding would be without effect. If our will is free these physical effects are not wholly predictable. And yet we know that physical systems are subject to laws that allow their behavior to be predicted. A conclusion of mentalism, then, is that physical systems must undergo change *in two ways*: a not wholly predictable way when minds are involved, and a predictable way governed by physical law. Compare this to Nobel laureate Eugene Wigner's account of what quantum theory implies:

> The . . . states of a physical system . . . change *in two ways*[:] . . . continuously, according to Schrödinger's equation . . . and discontinuously according to probability laws if a measurement is carried out on the system [by an observer]. [emphasis added]

In other word, when an "observer"—I would prefer to say "rational mind" or "subject of rational knowledge"—is involved there can be discontinuous and not wholly predictable changes in a physical system, whereas otherwise the system behaves in a way that is completely determined by Schrödinger's equation.

Wigner concludes that while "solipsism may be logically consistent with present quantum mechanics, monism in the sense of materialism is not." Another great physicist, Sir Rudolph Peierls, asserts as an implication of quantum theory that "the premise that you can describe in terms of physics the whole function of a human being . . . including its knowledge and its consciousness is untenable. There is still something missing."

It is true that the traditional interpretation of quantum mechanics espoused by von Neumann, Wigner, and Peierls is rivaled by other views. Nevertheless, this second prediction of mentalism, which had no possibility of fulfillment within classical (i.e., pre-quantum) physics and still strikes many as absurd, is at least arguably a conclusion to which quantum theory leads.

On the other side, it is a prediction of materialism that human beings can have no free will. The behavior of purely physical systems as it has ever been described by science involves only two possibilities: the regularity of deterministic laws or the randomness of stochastic laws. There is no room for the *tertium quid* that is free will. But this prediction of materialism is falsified by the data of our own experience: we actually exercise free will, and thereby know it to be other than either determined or random. As Dr. Johnson observed, while "all theory is against the freedom of the will, all experience is for it." Our experience of exercising free will is as much a fact as any facts about the brain or nervous system. Indeed, it is a more primary fact, for the existence of the brain and its connection with thoughts and mental acts is

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known only by a long chain of inference (valid though it undoubtedly is), whereas thoughts and mental acts themselves are known directly.

One of the curious things about Penrose is that he is at once a materialist (at least operationally) and a "mathematical Platonist." Like many mathematicians (including Gödel), he believes that mathematical truths have a timeless existence apart from human understanding of them. This mathematical Platonism is not necessarily incongruous with Penrose's materialism, since modern physics understands the physical universe in mathematical terms. Nevertheless, he is open to the charge of an interesting inconsistency. For one of his cardinal objections to mentalism is that we have no direct experience of minds subsisting without brains. But it is equally true that we have no direct experience of Ideas (mathematical or otherwise) subsisting without minds. And the Mind that could grasp the full contents of that timeless Platonic world of mathematical truths could certainly not be associated with the timebound operations of any physical brain.

The Penrose argument tells us that mere computers lack something that the human mind possesses. The mentalist position is that that something is spiritual. But granting all this it may still be asked whether computers do not exhibit a certain kind of intelligence, even if they cannot entirely duplicate human intelligence. Is there not evidence of this in the impressive increase in the strength of chess-playing programs like "Deep Thought," for example?

I would distinguish two senses of the word "intelligence." It can mean the ability to solve problems and perform certain kinds of tasks. Or it can mean the capacity for understanding and insight. It is the latter kind of intelligence that alone properly deserves to be called intellect, which humans possess and which computers utterly lack. Figuring out how to solve a new problem or perform a new task generally requires some degree of insight. But once the solution has been routinized it can be carried out in a purely mechanical, mindless way. A small child, for example, might be praised for his intellect if he figures out for himself how to make change correctly, but not so a vending machine. Of course, designing a vending machine requires intellect, but a vending machine itself has none. The same is true of chess-playing programs.

Chess is regarded as the intellectual game par excellence. But it is important to note that in principle chess could be played perfectly without any use of intellect at all. Since chess has a finite though vast number of possible positions, the game can in theory be "solved" by working backwards from the set of all final positions. A complete listing of all positions with the best move (or moves) in each could thus in principle be compiled. At that point an idiot of a machine could play perfect chess by simply looking up the correct moves. Alternatively, because there is an upper limit to how many moves a game of chess can last, a computer of vast though finite memory could calculate to the very end all possible variations from a given position, and thus play perfectly without any use of understanding. I hasten to add that this is not how actual chess-playing programs work. They can only calculate so many moves ahead and then must stop and evaluate the resulting positions. Such "positional judgments" are necessary based upon understanding of the game—the understanding of the programmers and their chess-playing consultants. The computer program itself has no more understanding of what it is doing than does a vending machine. In chess, essentially because of its finitude, computational brawn can substitute for insight. What Gödel showed is that in mathematics the same does not hold. As some wit once observed, "A horse that can count to ten is a remarkable horse, but it is not a remarkable mathematician." That is just as true of a computer that can count to a trillion.

Penrose's book is an exceedingly important one, but it will not be an easy one for those not technically inclined to follow. Much more accessible, though probably still difficult for most readers, is the brilliant essay of John Lucas that appeared in *The Modeling of Mind: Computers and Intelligence.* An even more satisfactory treatment, which puts these arguments into the context of a wider attack on materialism and defense of free will, is Lucas' book *The Freedom of the Will* (though this otherwise admirable book is sadly marred by a bizarrely heterodox chapter on God's foreknowledge). The argument made by these two Oxford scholars, so very different in their views of the world, is one that ought to be much more widely known.

It must be admitted that while we have faith that the human mind is understandable, we do not in fact understand it. It is indeed a very profound mystery how spirit and matter are integrated into a single nature in man in such a way as to respect the accuracy and consistency of physical law. But a mystery is not something incomprehensible in itself. It is something uncomprehended by us. Doubtless, further research on the brain will much enlighten us about these issues. Whether it will succeed in dispelling the mystery entirely, only time will tell. FT

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Books In Review

Voice of the Old Left

THE AGE OF EXTREMES: A HISTORY OF THE WORLD, 1914-1991. By ERIC HOBSBAWM. *Pantheon Books. 627 pp. $30.*

***Reviewed by* A. J. Bacevich**

ERIC HOBSBAWM ranks among the most prolific and most influential British historians of the entire post-war era. He is also a person who, throughout his long career, has without apology identified himself as a man of the left. So he remains today.

For Hobsbawm, history is the continuation of politics by other means. In exploring the past, the historian's true purpose is to shape the future. Thus, whether acknowledged or not, *real* history, serious history, is always deeply political. Neither predisposed to avoid controversy nor willing to confine himself to arid subjects of antiquarian interest, Hobsbawm makes no pretense of dispassionate objectivity. His is political history in the grand manner: he appropriates the largest canvas within reach and attacks it with bold, slashing interpretative strokes. And Hobsbawm appears to relish controversy. His overall aim is less to inform the ignorant or to enlighten the befuddled than to rally the like-minded and to antagonize the opposition.

Among Hobsbawm's best-known works is a trilogy on the "long nineteenth century," his term for the period from 1789 to 1914 during which European influence reached seemingly unassailable heights. *The Age of Extremes* forms a sequel to that trilogy, charting the course of what Hobsbawm has labeled the "short twentieth century" extending from the outbreak of World War I (and the ensuing demise of Europe) through the end of the Cold War—a history, not incidentally, of Hobsbawm's own time.

THIS IS A DEEPLY personal account. Although the narrator seldom intrudes directly into the story, Hobsbawm's version of the "short century" revolves to a large extent around the great controversies that animated the era's myriad progressives, social revolutionaries, and proponents of secular utopia—in short, the sundry groups that comprise the modern left with which Hobsbawm has aligned himself and that (with few exceptions) derived singular inspiration from the upheaval that in 1917 overturned the old order in Russia and gave birth to that beacon of social justice and humanitarian virtue, the Soviet Union. *The Age of Extremes* can best be understood as a testimonial to that left, Hobsbawm's effort to explain how such a worthy enterprise has now ended in abject and humiliating failure, its ideals discredited, its vast pretensions demolished. Above all, in recounting the "short twentieth century's" descent into barbarism, Hobsbawm seeks to absolve the left of any responsibility for the era's various horrors and to refute any suggestion that the Grand Cause itself might have been from the very outset misguided, if not inherently malignant.

It's a tough case to make, one requiring both bravado and guile. Hobsbawm offers plenty of both. He regales his reader with tales of his heroes: "the noble Ho Chi Minh," "the pacifically-minded Khrushchev," and, of course, "Fidel"—"strong and charismatic [and] determined to demonstrate personal bravery and to be a hero of whatever cause of freedom against tyranny." Hobsbawm acknowledges, but cannot quite bring himself to condemn, the crimes of Joseph Stalin. To do so would undermine his overall depiction of the Soviet Union as brave and admirable, unappreciated and willfully misunderstood. Thus, he advises, "the victory over Hitler's Germany was essentially won, *and could only have been won*, by the Red Army." (Emphasis added.) Having thus delivered the world from the scourge of fascism, communism next proceeded to save capitalism from itself "by providing it with the incentive, fear, to reform itself after the Second World War." Such fear on the part of the West was, of course, quite misplaced, since the Soviet Union at war's end yearned for nothing so much as to sustain "the framework of the all-embracing anti-fascist alliance, i.e., it looked forward to a long-term coexistence, or rather symbiosis, of capitalist and Communist systems."

Responsibility for the ensuing Cold War thus rests squarely upon the West (above all, upon the United States), which whipped itself into a frenzy over "the supposed Soviet threat." That such a threat never existed, according to Hobsbawm, is patently obvious. Stalin entertained no imperial aspirations. There was no Soviet monolith, merely "a consortium of Communist states, organized around the Soviet Union." (Did the residents of, say, Budapest in 1956 or Prague in 1968 somehow misconstrue the privileges accruing to them as members of this consortium? On this point, Hobsbawm is silent.) Wherever its political influence extended beyond its own borders, the USSR was "specifically committed to [building] mixed economies under multiparty parliamentary democracies."

Moreover, the economic and technological superiority of the West was from the outset so evident that for the capitalist bloc to feel challenged by communism was clearly absurd. The Cold War, "from the start, was a war of unequals." Thus, if we are to believe Hobsbawm, the Soviet Union was simultaneously so mighty that it alone possessed the strength to crush Nazi Germany and so benign and so weak that mindless hysteria along could explain why anyone would suspect Stalin's peaceful intentions.

AND SO IT GOES: that "passionate reformer" Mikhail Gorbachev is commended for singlehandedly extricat-

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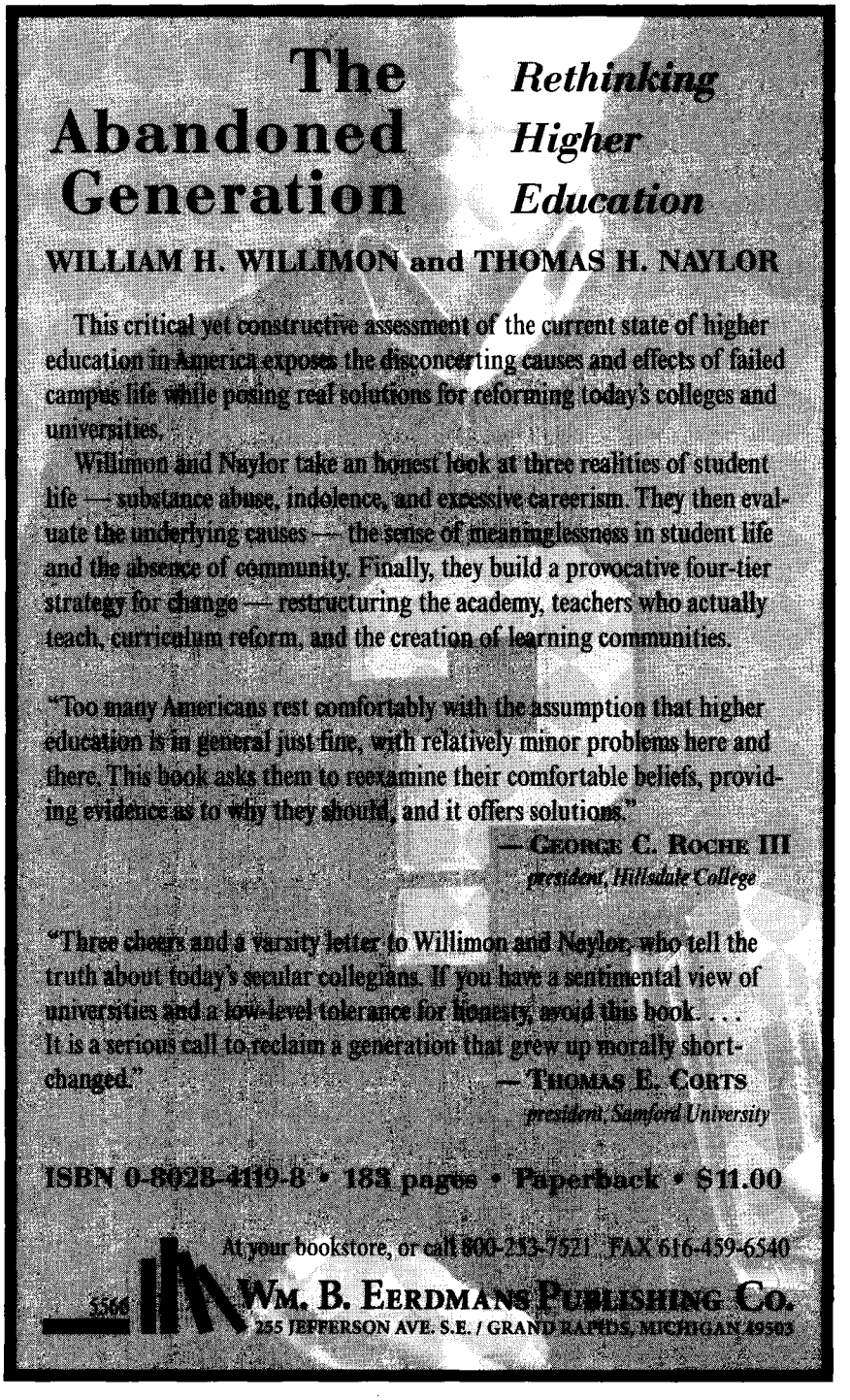
ing the world from the jaws of the Cold War; Israel is stigmatized and then quickly dismissed as simply a "new anti-Arab state"; the Catholic Church is repeatedly denounced for siding with the forces of political reaction against the forces of enlightenment. Indeed, Hobsbawm's antipathy for virtually all religion forms a recurrent underlying theme.

Were *The Age of Extremes* merely an apology for the left, it would be of limited interest. To the author's credit, his book is much more than that. According to Hobsbawm, future generations contemplating the furious ideological rows that fixed the attention of elites in the decades after 1917 may well wonder what all the fuss was about—not that the arguments over fascism or communism were pointless, but that in the long run they will turn out to be of less consequence than the massive technological, social, and cultural changes that have so transformed global society during the short twentieth century. The result, Hobsbawm argues, is that the world in which democratic capitalism has triumphed is, in fact, a world on the brink of profound crisis.

That Hobsbawm all too predictably attributes that crisis entirely to the crimes and excesses of capitalism is a point that need not detain us. That the maladies to which he points do indeed constitute a crisis of historic proportions is an argument that merits thoughtful consideration. Many items in his bill of particulars—recurring episodes of unspeakable violence and savagery decades after civilized peoples proclaimed "never again," growing desperation throughout much of the so-called Third World, the malaise of affluent societies suffering from the increasing "privatization of life" and the growth of "consumer egoism," the inadequacy and corruption of politics even in mature democracies, the diminished capacity of established institutions to respond to the challenges that they face—transcend ideology. Hobsbawm is on to something: with regard to the problems confronting mankind today, there is something different, larger, and particularly frightening.

To turn to Hobsbawm and his colleagues on the Old Left for a remedy to those problems, however, would be hazardous if not downright reckless. They have had their moment and the world is still tallying up the cost of the havoc they wreaked. Yet the collapse of the left's visions for a secular utopia—however welcome—does not detract from the validity of its critique. Rather, the very depth of that failure might remind us that the ultimate solution to our present crisis—if solution there be—is likely to be found not in the realm of politics but in the realm of the spirit.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Rethinking Higher Education
WILLIAM H. WILLIMON and THOMAS H. NAYLOR
This critical yet constructive assessment of the current state of higher education in America exposes the disconcerting causes and effects of failed campus life while posing real solutions for reforming today's colleges and universities.
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Seeking an Understanding of Faith

THE ASSURANCE OF THINGS HOPED FOR: A THEOLOGY OF CHRISTIAN FAITH. By AVERY DULLES, S.J. *Oxford University Press. 299 pp. $35.*

***Reviewed by* David F. Wells**

WITHOUT "faith it is impossible to please God," the Letter to the Hebrews declares (11:6), but what faith is, how it works, and what it does are matters on which the Church has not been entirely of one mind. On this subject, it has spoken with a multitude of voices, quite a few of which are in conflict, despite the fact, as Avery Dulles notes, that since New Testament times it has been commonly agreed that faith is the acceptance "of God's word or promises as true and trustworthy, and a commitment to live accordingly."

Dulles has produced a masterful survey of Christian thinking about faith, in the process exposing many of the issues entailed in its exercise. And though his expositions of what has been thought about the nature and function of faith are brief, they are also specific, careful, meticulously fair, and a model of how such a book should be written.

The book falls into two parts. The first is an historical sketch that begins with a chapter on the biblical teaching about faith and then marches forward steadily through the patristic era, into the Middle Ages, into the modern period, and concludes with developments in the late twentieth century. What one might not expect in a book written from a Catholic perspective, and one that concludes by formulating a synthesis out of many of the ideas that have been explicated, is that the Protestant side of the equation is also in full view. The Reformers' views are explored as well as those of succeeding Protestant thinkers, some sympathetic to the Reformers, such as the Puritans and Karl Barth, and others remote from their thinking, such as Schleiermacher and Ritschl.

THIS HISTORICAL SURVEY provides the backdrop to the second part of the book, which seeks to analyze the nature and function of faith as it has thus been framed by the past. Dulles switches from a chronological accounting to describing the patterns of thinking about faith evident in the past, which he calls "models." There thus emerge seven main ways of thinking about faith: propositional, transcendental, fiducial, affective-experimental, obediential, praxis, and personalist. Different though these ways of thinking are, Dulles nevertheless insists that they are often complementary to one another, not contradictory, and that it is hard to miss "the real and virtually unanimous consensus among Christian theologians about many fundamental points. It is generally agreed, for instance, that faith is a gift of God, that it rests on revelation, and that it is necessary to salvation."

Such unanimous consensus, however, by no means resolves the debate about faith. It does not settle the question whether faith must work through doctrine given by divine revelation, or whether it can function in the absence of such doctrine, since doctrine may be considered as simply a human response to the divine. Nor does this consensus settle the question of whether faith comes as an inner word of love, even as a substitute for the outer word of truth. Does faith have to have God as its explicit object? Does faith work in conjunction with knowledge or as an alternative to knowledge? If salvation is by faith alone, can faith live alone, unaccompanied by works of love and obedience?

Questions like these are addressed in the concluding chapters as Dulles seeks to "gather up the principal elements of the central Christian tradition and to restate them from the point of view of contemporary Catholic theology." The book ends with the results summarized under thirty-six theses about Christian faith, such as, "Faith is foundational," "Faith can be lost," or "Faith is a constant and universal possibility."

DULLES' MASTERY of the subject, his control of the secondary literature, and his economical, even terse, style mean that this book would stand out even if there were many others in the market on the same subject, which there are not. Two features of the book, however, are worth pondering.

The first is the assumption that there is an identifiable "central Christian tradition" with respect to what faith is. The reality, I suspect, is a bit messier than this, for faith does not stand alone but is a part of how we think about many other things: salvation, the Bible, obedience, the sacraments, and the Church. The moment faith is placed in this larger context great fissures begin to appear in "the central Christian tradition." When Dulles describes faith, for example, as "a natural impossibility, a miracle of grace, a sheer gift from God for which one can only ask on one's knees," he is speaking for a broad swath of Christian thinking across the ages. Yet when this statement is put into the larger theological framework in which it must function, it takes on rather different meanings—in Luther as compared with Thomas Aquinas, in Barth as compared with Origen.

This is true, too, within shorter time frames in which comparisons are made. Vincent of Lerins could write his *Commonitoria* in the fifth century creating consensus out of the gathering accumulation of teaching and practice in the churches, but many years later as Abelard looked back, he noted in his *Sic et Non* that there were 158 topics on which there was significant theological disagreement, and quite a few of these impinge upon the meaning of faith.

In 1535 Luther wrote a preface to Robert Barnes' *Vitae Pontificum* in which he said that he had initially thought that the case against the papacy should be made from Scripture, but now he was delighted to see that it could be made from history as well. Thus did the ground of contro-

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The Nine Lives of Population Control

Edited by MICHAEL CROMARTIE

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versy shift and, in the following century, there followed a massive outpouring of studies, on both sides, that armed themselves with patristic opinion. The Reformers and their followers argued that, in effect, the Reformation was a contest between patristic and medieval Christianity, and that it marked the triumph of the former over the latter. Thus Calvin claimed that "if the contest were to be determined by patristic authority, the tide of victory—to put it very modestly—would turn to our side." Even if the Reformers' contention was only partly right, it does raise questions about the existence of this "central Christian tradition" and the continuity between the patristic period and the medieval. The profound disjunctures in understanding within and across periods lead one to wonder whether this "tradition" is more of an article of faith for the author than a demonstrable fact.

This leads us to a second point. There is a curious tonal ambiguity to the book. In the first section, in which he presents the history of the Church's thought about faith, Dulles appears to be agnostic regarding which sources count as authoritative. The book opens with a twelve-page summary of biblical teaching on faith, but the Bible seems to carry no special authority in Dulles' historical account. Similarly, though he considers in somewhat briefer space Trent, Vatican I, and Vatican II, Dulles writing as a historian seems not to grant these councils special weight. In the second half of the book, however, when he writes as a constructive theologian, Dulles cites the Bible and the major councils as authorities. The bifurcation between the historian's techniques and the theologian's creates a chasm into which Protestants have fallen with some regularity in this century, and there are dangers in the bifurcation for Catholic scholars as well.

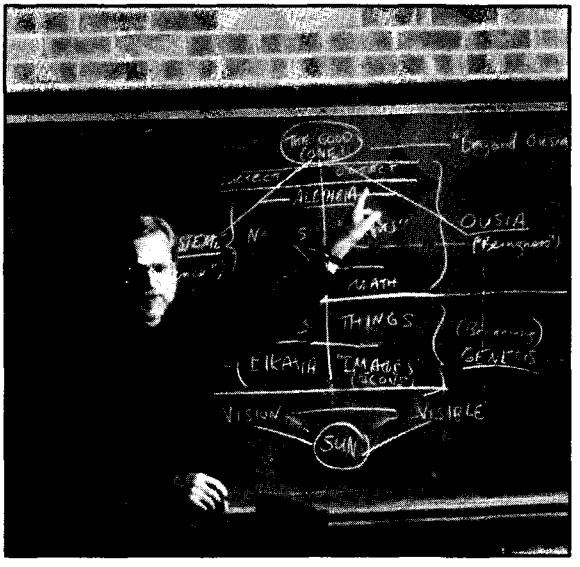
This is, nevertheless, a learned, commanding, and sure-footed study. It is intended for use as a theological text. The expositions, however, are so compact, the style so economical, that the reader has to supply quite a lot of understanding for the book to be effective. This, then, is no book for neophytes. It is, however, a solid and welcome addition for those more advanced.

The Compleat Literary Man

THE ANTI-EGOTIST: KINGSLEY AMIS, MAN OF LETTERS. By PAUL FUSSELL. *Oxford University Press. 206 pp. $23.*

***Reviewed by* Brian Murray**

KINGSLEY AMIS is hard to beat at darts. His 1991 *Memoirs,* for exam-



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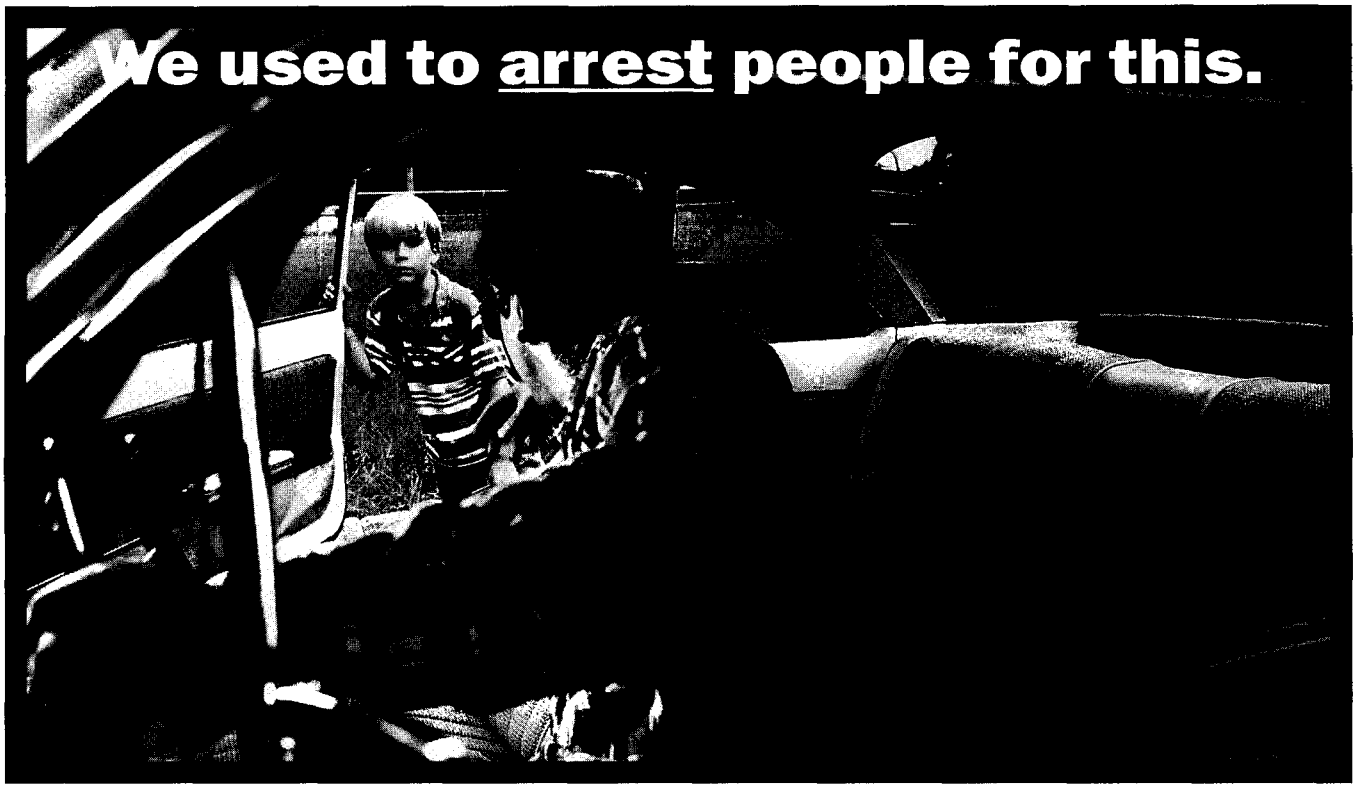

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ple, showed a marked fondness for the pointed remark—and a rare skill at hitting the bullseye. Amis' *Memoirs* targeted many of the people and places that, over the years, brought him irritation or outrage. Writing with his usual clarity and wit, Amis mocked the magnificently affected style of one of his former dons, Lord David Cecil. He captured the bullying ways of the famous children's author Roald Dahl. He took shots at Leo Rosten, Enoch Powell, Arnold Wesker, and Malcolm Muggeridge, among others, and offered few kind words for the state of contemporary psychology—or the state of Tennessee.

Several reviewers of Amis' *Memoirs* were troubled, even shocked. One, writing in the *Guardian*, found "strains of misogyny, dissatisfaction, sentimentality, and vengefulness" in the book; another—the American academic Joel Conarroe—thought it a sad reflection on Amis' character. Amis, he decided, was "not a very nice fellow."

THIS OF COURSE is the popular image of Kingsley Amis: the once Angry Young Man grown more bitter and Blimpish with the years. It is also rather misleading, as more careful readers of Amis' novels, poems, and essays know. The man has a tongue, certainly, and some pretty sharp teeth. But as his *Memoirs* also very clearly reveal, Amis is entirely capable of self-criticism. He never displays himself as the Perfect Man, immune to the blunders and petty vanities that dog lesser mortals. He admits to dark moods and fits of conceit. And he loves as well as loathes. Amis shows affection when he writes about certain friends, like Philip Larkin, and certain places, like Swansea, Wales. Indeed he quite likes many things: science fiction, jazz, friendly pubs, good booze.

Amis also admires the work of Paul Fussell. In the *Memoirs*, Amis refers to Fussell in a chapter recalling several trips to the United States.

BRIAN MURRAY *is the author of* Charles Dickens. *He teaches at Loyola College in Baltimore.*

Amis' views on America, as on many subjects, cannot be reduced to a black and bitter line or two. He cannot be dismissed easily as anti-American any more than he can be fairly described as misogynistic, although both labels have, of course, stuck. Amis writes fondly of the generosity and jocularity, the natural and urban beauty, that he often found in the States. But he also doesn't ignore the squalor, vulgarity, and violence that he has also found here—as well as the curious forms of Anglomania that tend to flourish in certain academic circles. It is on this subject and on American higher education generally that Amis defers to Fussell, whose 1983 book, *Class*, he singles out for special praise.

Class, controversial on publication, is now widely excerpted in college anthologies. It is still Fussell's best-known work—perhaps an unfortunate fact. *Class* includes many sharp and funny insights into an American culture where, more than ever, people are identified—and identify themselves—by the clothes they wear and the products they own. But *Class* is also often cranky and self-congratulating, and comes to a curiously fatuous close as Fussell extols the tastes and habits of those he calls "X people"—an enlightened and detached caste that, alas, brings to mind the sort of pompous, highly self-conscious types one tends to find filling the bars and seminar rooms at national meetings of the Modern Language Association.

In fact Fussell is a superb critic, one of the best of our time. *The Great War and Modern Memory* (1975) and *Abroad: British Literary Traveling Between the Wars* (1980) are, for example, very fine, offering scholarly rigor and critical insight as well as lively, lucid prose. Fussell is also brilliant when he writes about the Second World War; "My War," for example, which vividly recounts his own harrowing experience of that conflict, is surely among the best essays written by any American in the past fifty years.

AND FUSSELL'S latest book, on his now infamous friend, does not disappoint. *The Anti-Egotist* offers an entertaining and convincing analysis of Amis' large body of work, emphasizing "his nonfiction and his literary learning, his performance as a critic, a learned anthologist, a memoirist, a teacher, and a poet—in short, a man of letters in the old sense, a writer conspicuous for complex literary knowledge and subtle taste as well as for vigorous views on politics and society." Fussell focuses on works that previous commentators have largely ignored—including *What Became of Jane Austen?* (1970) and *The Amis Collection* (1990).

Fussell begins by conceding that, sometimes, Sir Kingsley does go over the top. During the final phases of the Cold War, Amis in both his writing and his talk appeared to have "lost his cool," overblowing the lingering Soviet threat and spotting everywhere signs of the West's decline and fall. "Amis' catalogue of dislikes broadened alarmingly," Fussell remembers, and came to include sandals, beards, and—it appeared—"everyone leaning toward the Labor, Liberal, and in the USA, Democratic parties." Not only in the *Memoirs*, then, did critics find evidence of "these unattractive, Evelyn Waugh-like prejudices."

But Fussell shows that those who simply comb Amis' work in search of shocking statements cannot appreciate its full value, or understand the moral tradition from which it stems. Fussell, who has also written widely on English Augustan literature, contends that Amis is best viewed within a tradition of "moral satire" that also includes Swift and Pope, Mark Twain and Flaubert.

The great satirist needs more, obviously, than "bad temper and irrational hatred." He needs a certain sense, tested by time, of the difference between the beautiful and the ugly, the good and bad. "Justice," Fussell notes, quoting Aristotle, "'consists in loving *and hating* aright.' And in Amis' word, *aright* means on grounds which, although on the surface social, are underneath profoundly moral."

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Amis' moral and aesthetic values stem from his continuing concern with "social generosity." In fact, Fussell notes, this is "one of Amis' obsessions," informing nearly everything he writes—be it a critical essay or a restaurant review. For Amis this means that writers should make their work "accessible to ordinary people"; that hosts and restauranteurs should not stint guests "on drink or anything else."

As a result, the "implicit" heroes in Amis' fiction tend to be magnanimous men, like Gore-Urquart in *Lucky Jim* (1954), still his most famous novel. Amis' targets, moreover, are not themselves vulnerable, but generally those with influence or privilege who are also false, stingy, or mean. Thus Amis' critical portrayal of Dahl, for example, in his *Memoirs*. And thus the presence in Amis' fiction of such figures as Roger Micheldene in *One Fat Englishman* (1963) and Alun Weaver in *The Old Devils* (1986).

As a "a man of letters" Amis, writes Fussell, belongs to a tradition, perhaps fading, that also includes the diverse likes of Arnold Bennett, George Orwell, Robert Graves, and the late Julian Symons—all of whom published widely, in various modes, aiming for a rather wide readership without compromising their intellectual or literary values. "Any proper writer," Amis himself has noted, "ought to be able to write about anything"—without resorting to showy displays of clever prose.

Amis, thus, never warmed to Vladimir Nabokov, as Fussell shows. Moreover, he has been consistently critical of the modernist tradition. As Fussell reminds his readers, Amis in the 1950s, writing for the *Spectator* and other periodicals, was "perhaps the first intelligent critic"—or at least the first non-"stuffy" one—to "bring his wide command of literature, as well as his wit, to the task of seriously exposing the critical orthodoxy of Modernism." Amis found too much Modernist writing not only obscure, but self-righteous, and imbued with what Fussell calls "a hatred—and that is not too strong a word—of ordinary people."

Amis' own willingness to be accessible and welcoming as a writer is obvious. He has edited such anthologies as *The Faber Popular Reciter* (1978) and *The Oxford Book of Light Verse* (1978). He continues to write for newspapers and magazines. In fact, Amis' *The Pleasure of Poetry* (1990) is drawn from a series of columns that he wrote for the *Daily Mirror*, of all places, a publication more famous for its pin-up girls than its promotion of good verse.

But as Fussell suggests, Amis' willingness and ability to speak to a very popular audience on the subject of poetry illustrates particularly well his continuing interests and aims. Five days a week, for more than a year, Amis discussed meter and metaphor and related matters between the TV schedule and the comics page. Moreover he did so with clear pleasure, and without a hint of arrogance. "Part of the motive," writes Fussell, was "to see how many people would respond to poetry that was understandable and that did not humiliate them."

This experiment, "an act unique in literary history," was a success, Fussell writes; Amis "received thousands of letters of encouragement and praise, and he must have felt that he'd done exactly what he'd aimed at when John Mortimer told him that three years after the poetry column closed down, a London taxi driver said he missed it."

Kingsley Amis is no saint. And some of his judgments—insisting, for example, that John D. MacDonald "is by any standards a better writer than Saul Bellow"—can only strike many of us as willfully perverse. But he is certainly not a monster or a philistine. As Fussell demonstrates in *The Anti-Egotist*, Amis is a very tho ıghtful and literate man devoted ɔ the sound and sane discussion of literature at a time when much criticism reveals more the desire to obfuscate than to delight. Amis "may be thought at some distance from Conarroe's 'not a very nice fellow,'" Fussell writes, "or at least much more complicated than

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the caricature Tory he is often taken for."

The Moral Foundations of Jurisprudence

THE RETURN OF GEORGE SUTHERLAND: RESTORING A JURISPRUDENCE OF NATURAL RIGHTS. By HADLEY ARKES. *Princeton University Press. 297 pp. $29.95.*

Reviewed by **Russell Hittinger**

THIS WORK is not strictly speaking a biography, though it reports the key facts about the life of Justice George Sutherland. Hadley Arkes analyzes Sutherland's most significant opinions in order to identify and clarify the "moral foundations of jurisprudence." Sutherland's jurisprudence would supply "the moral ground that is missing in the jurisprudence of both liberals and conservatives in our own time." Arkes points out the curious judicial legacy of the New Deal. Conservatives, on the one hand, reacting against the undisciplined measures of the era, tend to reject natural rights in favor of legal positivism—sometimes going so far as to embrace the judicial philosophy of Hugo Black (one of the arch-New Dealers). Liberals, on the other hand, wishing to extend the sphere of individual rights against government, tend to reject any universal moral logic that might ground natural rights.

The book consists of eight chapters: three on Sutherland's background and intellectual principles, three on various constitutional problems in New Deal legislation, one on executive powers and foreign policy, and a conclusion. As in Arkes' previous books, we find here a remarkable sharpness of analysis and a limpid writing style. Arkes exposes the impostors in the house of jurisprudence. He saves Sutherland from oblivion and obloquy. He advances on many fronts our understanding of the authority of moral reasoning in public affairs. Nevertheless, even the serious (indeed, grateful) reader might wonder whether Arkes treats sufficiently the issues that make some conservatives hold the jurisprudence of natural rights at arm's length. If, in what follows, I comment in greater depth upon a single unresolved issue rather than upon the many strengths of the book, I apologize only by pointing out that the book is serious enough to bear this kind of scrutiny.

RUSSELL HITTINGER *teaches in the School of Philosophy at the Catholic University of America.*

BORN IN England in 1862, George Sutherland immigrated at the age of two to the territory of Utah with his father, who was attracted by the Church of Latter Day Saints and the American frontier. Though Sutherland's father eventually defected from the Church, Sutherland nevertheless enrolled as a "Gentile" student at Brigham Young University (then B.Y. Academy). Throughout his life, he expressed appreciation for both the education and kindly tolerance he received in this fledgling school of the Saints. After completing his law studies at the University of Michigan, Sutherland took up the practice of law in Utah, eventually becoming active in the Republican party.

Elected to the House in 1900 and to the Senate in 1905, he became an advocate of progressive measures on such issues as governmental banking, women's suffrage, workmen's compensation, and the working conditions of miners and seamen. Yet after he was appointed to the Supreme Court by President Warren Harding in 1922, Sutherland immediately made his mark as a staunch defender of individual rights of contract against what was regarded at the time as liberal social legislation, arguing in *Adkins v. Lyons* (1923) that a 1918 federal law establishing a minimum wage for women violated the due process clause of the Fifth Amendment.

SUTHERLAND'S career on the Court encompasses the turbulent early years of the Depression and the New Deal. He was one of the "Four Horsemen" (along with Justices Butler, Van Deventer, and McReynolds) who resisted the economic and social legislation of Roosevelt and the Seventy-Third Congress. The National Industrial Recovery Act was ruled unconstitutional in 1935, and the Agricultural Adjustment Act in 1936. Federal judges by 1936 had issued some 1,600 injunctions to restrain federal officials from carrying out various congressional acts. The effort by Sutherland to preserve the Constitution in a time of national emergency, however, ultimately was not successful. By 1941, all of the Horsemen had retired (Sutherland in 1938) and been replaced by New Dealers. Having spent his formidable intellect against the tide of history, Sutherland was politely consigned to history. When we think of the important legal minds of the century, we are likely to recall the names of those such as Justices Douglas, Black, and Frankfurter, who served after Sutherland.

During the first decade of his tenure on the bench Sutherland was a forceful champion of substantive due process. According to this view, when government takes away liberty or property, it is not only required to do so in a way that is procedurally fair, but must also justify the law in terms of a more exacting standard of equity. Why, for example, should women be subjected to restrictions on their liberty of contract that could not lawfully be imposed on men under similar circumstances? Once the question is posed in this fashion, the issue of natural justice seems unavoidable—for what is being contested is not merely whether a law is competently and properly enacted as a legal matter, but also whether the law is substantively just.

From the outset, this jurisprudence has been controversial. Beginning with the *Lochner* case in 1905, when the Supreme Court invalidated a New York law regulating the hours of bakery workers, progressive critics maintained that the Court was illegitimately imposing a laissez-faire ideology by the mechanism of substantive due process. Much

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later, after the Warren and Burger Courts used "due process" as a tool for discovering unenumerated rights of privacy, conservative critics such as Judge Robert Bork have alleged that by assuming power to review the moral worthiness of legislation, the Court's jurisprudence of substantive due process alters the Constitution's distribution of authority, not only as between legislatures and courts, but also between federal and state governments.

Arkes does a credible job of answering the first objection, that due process was a foil for unbridled capitalism. At least as practiced by Sutherland, substantive due process was grounded in the natural right of the individual against the arbitrary restrictions of government, and certainly was not an all-purpose immunity against the police powers of the State. It was a theory of justice, not a theory of economics masquerading as a theory of justice.

Arkes proposes that "what we call 'natural law,' or an argument about 'natural rights,' may be satisfied by an argument carried out strenuously, with the laws of reason, for what is engaged there is nothing less than the 'nature' of 'a rational creature as such.'" Natural rights are the moral restraints appropriate to the way rational agents govern one another through positive law. That they were typically used to invalidate legislation regulating economic liberties is incidental rather than essential. Arkes insists, "The Constitution would restrain the government from a host of 'arbitrary restrictions' as it sought to interfere with natural rights in any of their dimensions, whether in the freedom of people to engage in political speech or in the claim to keep the earnings of their own labor."

By the same token, shouldn't rational agents be protected against laws that are not made by a proper authority? Establishing and maintaining fair shares of authority is one of the first goods of any polity. Indeed, without this allocation we might doubt whether there is a polity at all. On this score, it is not so clear that Arkes gives a complete answer to the second objection, that the Supreme Court's substantive due process jurisprudence violates the institutions of authority mandated by the positive law of the Constitution. It is not enough to convince us that substantive due process represents the moral restraints of natural justice rather than the judicial impositions of an ideology; Arkes must also convince us that the method does not improperly reallocate political authority.

The problem is that fair distribution of authority rests on contingent and arbitrary grounds. The word "arbitrary" usually conjures the pejorative connotation of an act of will done without reason. But "arbitrary" can also mean a decision not in the absence of good reasons, but rather in the absence of reasons dictating that the law be this rather than that. Much of our positive law is "arbitrary" in this sense. Every polity needs someone to make determinate whatever is left indeterminate by natural law. The constitutional allocation of authority to make and adjudge morally worthy laws would seem to be arbitrary in this latter sense. There is nothing in "the 'nature' of 'a rational creature as such'" that dictates the particular *institutional* allocations of political authority. Natural law may dictate that polities exist and that the governments of such polities have some authority, but natural law does not dictate a specific distribution of power.

To be sure, Arkes never denies that the axiomatic principles of morality and the institutional principles of jurisdiction are distinguishable. Yet he so emphasizes the nonarbitrary character of moral logic that the arbitrary character of institutional offices and of most positive law is given short shrift. It is one thing to defend the idea that there are principles of justice not dependent upon local conventions; it is quite another thing to defend the distribution of authority according to a particular order of positive law. If Arkes is to convince conservatives that Sutherland was correct in his jurisprudence of substantive due process, he will have to convince them that it comports with the institutional logic of authority under *this* Constitution, and not merely that the moral logic Sutherland brought to particular cases was sound and consistent.

Interestingly, Sutherland did not rule out the possibility that New Deal schemes, however improbably, could promote justice in the substantive sense. But he did question whether the Constitution authorizes the federal government to pursue such schemes, even in the name of justice. Sutherland contended that the "national powers of legislation were not aggregated but enumerated." The moral questions involved in a problem such as economic justice must be distinguished from the constitutional principle distributing the authority and power to deal with the problem. The universality of a right does not imply universality of jurisdiction to enforce it.

Arkes gives a brilliant criticism of the "new age of administration" in which lawyers believed that technical facts could be substituted for the moral authority of jural reasoning. In a 1932 case considering restrictions that the state of Oklahoma had placed on people entering the ice business, Justice Brandeis urged his colleagues to adopt the principle that under certain circumstances "free competition might be harmful to the community." Brandeis mounted an array of facts concerning the relation between food temperatures and health, the per capita consump-

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tion of ice, and the number of refrigerators sold in Oklahoma. Brandeis contended that the Court should not stand in the way of "experimentation in the fields of social and economic science." On this view, the several states should be regarded as experimental laboratories of enlightened practice. (One cannot help but note the analogy to some Republicans today, who cast the principle of federalism in precisely these terms.)

Arkes points out that this amateur science is a simulacrum of legal reasoning. It has little capacity to enlighten us as to the principles that ought to govern the use of power. But just where one might have expected him to conclude that sociological and managerial "jurisprudence" contributes nothing to the adjudication of contests over the allocation of powers, he takes the problem in a different direction, arguing for the superiority of moral reasoning. On this score, we could hardly disagree with Arkes. Given the choice between policies determined by the moral logic of Sutherland versus policies determined by the shallow, managerial methods of the Brandeis school, it is not hard to see where liberty is best protected. Nevertheless, the difficult question still remains: According to what norm do we distinguish the rightful and wrongful exercise of the police powers of the states? Even if we agree with Arkes that there exist stable moral principles governing justice in economic matters, we are also interested in who has authority to make laws with regard to buying and selling. To show that the conclusion cannot be reached by a managerial index does not show that it can be reached by means of abstract moral principles. To show Brandeis wrong is not to show Sutherland right, for the question of the positive constitutional law distributing authority still remains.

Throughout the book, Arkes calls our attention to the distinction between "propositions that are merely contingent and problematic and propositions that have the force of logical necessity." A jurisprudence of contingent facts is no jurisprudence at all. Fundamental principles must be distinguished from contingent cases that exemplify those principles. These ideas are the stock-in-trade for anyone avowing a classical jurisprudence, and Arkes expounds them masterfully. The Constitution, however, consists largely of rules distributing authority—rules that are not adequately characterized in terms of necessary propositions. Although Arkes (via Sutherland) gets close to the nub of this problem in the chapters on the New Deal, he is more intent upon winning the argument about the authority of moral reasoning against skeptics, both left and right.

There are other critics, however, who are not moral skeptics, but hold that the positive law of the Constitution places institutional restraints upon how and by whom moral arguments can be made. In the only case he argued before the Court, John Marshall claimed, "The judicial authority can have no right to question the validity of a law, unless such a jurisdiction is expressly given by the Constitution." Until we can understand why Marshall's proposition deserves equal consideration in a theory of natural rights—that is, until the morality of authority is distinguished from and related to the authority of moral reasoning—Arkes' argument will be incomplete.

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BRIEFLY NOTED

CONSCIOUSNESS AND TRANSCENDENCE: THE THEOLOGY OF ERIC VOEGELIN. By MICHAEL P. MORRISSEY. *University of Notre Dame Press. 353 pp. $41.95.*

In the 1940s Eric Voegelin wrote that a solution to the modern crisis would require, among other things, a "new Christian philosophy of history" adequate to the full range of political and cultural developments of recent centuries. The philosophy of history he produced over the next four decades can be seen as a monumental effort toward the satisfaction of that requirement, but whether it is truly "Christian" in character has remained a source of controversy, due both to the principles that guide Voegelin's exposition of meaning in history and to his analysis of Christianity itself. Michael P. Morrissey, a professor of theology, has produced the first book-length study of the questions posed to Christian theology, and theology in general, by Voegelin's work. That it is such a responsible and illuminating study is due largely to Morrissey's solid understanding that it is Voegelin's theory of consciousness, presented and assessed here in detail in its development and refinement, that provides the key to appreciating the theological dimension of Voegelin's philosophy and the basis for working out what Morrissey calls "the principles of a Voegelinian theology." A late chapter comparing Voegelin's work with the Catholic theology of Bernard Lonergan—whose ambi-

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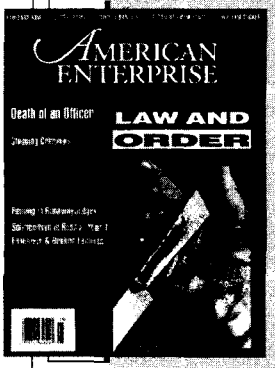

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tions in responding to the modern crisis matched Voegelin's and whose work, like his, takes its stand on a foundational account of consciousness—helps Morrissey to bring Voegelin's thought into what he calls a "theological community of discourse" and sharpens his final chapter's presentation of Voegelin's "reconstruction" of Christian theology. However one may respond to Voegelin's philosophy of history, its challenging theological implications are presented without evasion and with exemplary clarity in this well-organized and thorough study.

—Glenn Hughes

BEING AND THE BETWEEN. By WILLIAM DESMOND. *State University of New York Press. 557 pp. $74.50 cloth, $24.95 paper.*

It takes patience to be in-between, still on the road. William Desmond calls for that kind of patience in metaphysics. With the best of postmodernism he repudiates "totalizing" claims to "have it all figured out." Whatever timeless truths we know we know in time, and we would be impatient to claim to be home already while still on the way. But we are on the way. Truth is an attainable goal, even truth about the transcendent, so long as we are mindful that we are creatures "in-between" origin and goal. To help us stay humble but vigorous, Desmond proposes a fourfold division of the ways we seek the truth about reality. The *univocal* understanding of being is the language of clear meanings that make proofs compelling to any mind capable of considering the argument and evidence. The *equivocal* understanding is an indispensable complement, especially to account for the self, uniqueness, and subjectivity. It may be one world we inhabit, but each person has a particular perspective. Desmond's *dialectical* understanding of being might be exemplified by a conversation, an attempt to transcend the solipsistic temptation by engaging another whom one cannot control. The *metaxological* sense (derived from Plato's term for "between") is Desmond's name for thinking about mediating structures. With St. Bernard of Clairvaux, who defines humility as "a reverent love of the truth," Desmond stresses the need for openness as well as closure. But in contrast to skeptical paralysis about the foundations for knowledge, there are standpoints reliable for those still in-between, including the call of the goals of truth and goodness as a vocation worthy of human creatures.

— Joseph Koterski, S.J.

A CONCISE HISTORY OF THE EARLY CHURCH. By NORBERT BROX. *Continuum. 184 pp. $18.95.*

A somewhat schematic account of early Christian history up to the fifth century. What Brox has to say is accurate and up-to-date, but because the book is arranged topically (church life and organization; conflicts, heresies, schisms; theological literature) the great story and the vigorous personalities that make up early Christian history remain on the periphery. One hundred seventy five pages of text is perhaps not enough to bring this period alive.

—Robert L. Wilken

AMBROSE OF MILAN: CHURCH AND COURT IN A CHRISTIAN CAPITAL. By NEIL B. MCLYNN. *University of California Press. 406 pp. $45.*

One of the many interesting details in this new study of Ambrose is that his basilica in Milan was five times the size of Augustine's basilica in Hippo! In contrast to Augustine, however, Ambrose is a strangely inaccessible figure about whom (though he wrote much) we know much less than some of his Christian contemporaries. It is Ambrose's outward behavior on the public stage, writes McLynn, "enfolded in the dignity of his priestly office," that is the best clue to his historical significance, not his inner life. Ambrose even departed life on his own terms, dying on Easter Saturday so that his corpse became the focus of the Easter vigil. A fine book, fresh and perceptive, on one of the great figures in Christian history.

—RLW

THE RAPTURE OF POLITICS. Edited by STEVE BRUCE et al. *Transaction. 150 pp. $19.95 paper.*

This book doubles as an issue of the scholarly journal, *Sociology of Religion*, and offers eight essays on the "New Christian Right." The editors employ an epigram from Max Weber: "The early Christians knew full well the world is governed by demons and that he who lets himself in for politics, that is, for power and force as means, contracts with diabolical powers and for his action it is *not* true that good can follow only from good and evil only from evil, but that often the opposite is true. Anyone who fails to see this is, indeed, a political infant." That wisdom informs most of these essays, which range from electoral num-

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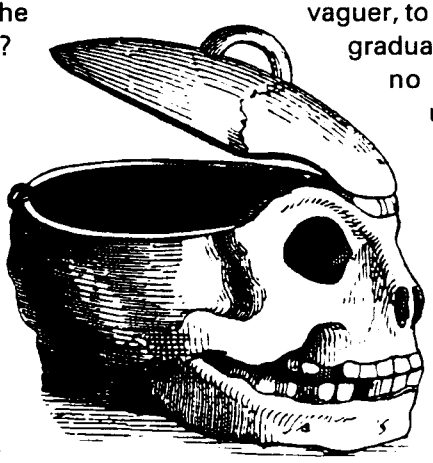
Pick-and-Choose Catholics: So Open-Minded Their Brains Have Fallen Out

It's stupid to fall for every passing fashion. But that's the story of liberal Catholicism since Vatican II. Remember the silly infatuation with the "secular city"? Who can forget the red-hot liberation theologians whose utopian dreams have turned to ash! The list of follies is long.

Now radical feminism is all the rage. And what are we getting? Rampant divorce. Wounded and neglected children. Abortion. Sexual confusion and gay lib. Attempts to rehabilitate fictional goddesses and reintroduce pagan priestesses. Mutilation of the English language. "Liberated" religious orders, which are now dying! And, not least, claims that Jesus committed the *sin of sexism* when He chose only males for His priesthood and that He was wrong when He taught us to call God our *Father*.



Of course, if Jesus committed an injustice in excluding women from the priesthood, then He could hardly be divine, and if He didn't have the authority to identify God as our Father, then He didn't come down from Heaven and wasn't a member of any Trinity. Bye-bye Christianity!

Liberal pick-and-choose Catholics are trendy types who crave the approval of the world and can't stand the thought of being Politically *In*correct. They're intellectual cowards — and imitators of the liberal *Protestants*, who long ago devised a smorgasbord religion in order to prove their "open-mindedness" and cozy up to the world. Very clever. But what do liberal Protestants have to show for their efforts? *Dying churches!* Why? Because the result of liberal Protestantism has been, in the words of Flannery O'Connor, "to turn religion into poetry and therapy, to make truth vaguer and vaguer, to banish intellectual distinctions,...and gradually to come to believe that God has no power...cannot reveal himself to us...and that religion is our own sweet invention." So why bother to go to church anymore? Not so clever, after all! Trendy religion is not only counter-productive, it's just plain dumb.

Cardinal Newman said that "some authority there must be if there is a revelation given." Catholicism is a *revealed* religion, not a concocted one, and our Lord gave *authority* to St. Peter and his successor popes to guard that revelation from fads and delusions. The NEW OXFORD REVIEW, a Catholic monthly magazine with an international audience, is published in Berkeley — yes, *that* Berkeley — so we've seen fads and delusions galore. We know frauds when we see them. We stand with the Catholicism of the ages, the Magisterium, and the Pope. We articulate the full splendor of Catholic truth, and, like Chesterton, even help gullible Catholics relocate their brains.

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bers-crunching to reflections on utopian politics. One chapter on shifting religious voting blocs by Lyman Kellstedt and colleagues gives greater detail in support of their article in these pages, "It's the Culture, Stupid! 1992 and Our Political Future" (April 1994). A valuable collection for students of American politics and religion.

CHRISTIANITY: ESSENCE, HISTORY, AND FUTURE. By HANS KÜNG. *Continuum. 936 pp. $44.50.*

To cut to the bottom line, the author says that "Christians may be sure that Christianity has a future even in the third millennium after Christ." That, regrettably, is typical of a large book that largely consists of obiter dicta strung along a schema of just about everything that has ever been said about Christianity. While there is an impressive bibliography, very little is argued. *Hans Küng hat gesagt.* And most of it, including his projection of an eco-theological universal ethic, he has gesagt many times before.

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THE NEXT POPE. By PETER HEBBLETHWAITE. *HarperCollins. 186 pp. $20.*

Over his long years of reporting on the Vatican for the *Tablet* and the *National Catholic Reporter,* Hebblethwaite made no secret of his belief that the pontificate of John Paul II is one of unmitigated disaster. Written at a point of journalistic certitude about the imminent demise of this pope, and with his candidate, Cardinal Martini of Milan, ready at hand, Hebblethwaite wrote: "A conclave is a moment of freedom, a chance for the Church to make a fresh start. Conversely, the death of a pope is not a matter for gloom. After all, a pope should be better prepared for death than most of us." This book, which appears shortly after the death of Peter Hebblethwaite, does his memory no honor.

THE PREACHER KING. By RICHARD LISCHER. *Oxford University Press. 344 pp. $25.*

A professor of homiletics at Duke University offers an admiring biography of Martin Luther King, Jr., with specific reference to his oratory. The theme is the power of the Word and it is effectively developed, although at the expense of neglecting the social forces and institutions that King used and, frequently, was used by. Lischer's original work with King's texts will be valuable to other students of this remarkable figure in twentieth-century history.

CAN THESE BONES LIVE? By ERNEST SANDEEN. *University of Notre Dame Press. 59 pp. $9.95 paper.*

A charming collection of new poems by a distinguished octogenarian poet charmed still to be alive, charmed still to arise in the morning and look out at the world, charmed still to write new poems. The themes of the poems are often dark: lost youth, lost chances, lost friends, lost spouses, and—always looming—the soon to be lost life. But in the darkness, Sandeen's joy still shines through, a joy at having lived long enough and well enough to find in each additional day a welcome new friend and in death at last an old friend long-expected. "A Late Twentieth-Century Prayer," the title poem, and the humorous epigrams "At the Beach" and "A Stranger, Coming and Going" are especially fine and prove that Sandeen's technical skill has also endured.

EITHER/OR: THE GOSPEL OR NEOPAGANISM. Edited by CARL E. BRAATEN and ROBERT W. JENSON. *Eerdmans. 125 pp. $9.99 paper.*

The editors and several of the contributors are familiar to the readers of this journal, so, perhaps not surprisingly, we warmly recommend this spirited guide to Christian faithfulness in an often hostile culture. Do not be fooled by the excessively Barthian (or is it Kierkegaardian, or both?) title. The authors of these essays are most favorably disposed toward the Gospel's engagement with the culture, but they understand, as all too few do these days, that real engagement requires uncompromising clarity about the meaning of the Gospel. To the authors: thanks, we needed that.

THE NEXT AMERICAN NATION: THE NEW NATIONALISM AND THE FOURTH AMERICAN REVOLUTION. By MICHAEL LIND. *Free Press. 436 pp. $25.*

The author, currently with the *New Republic,* has been writing prolifically in the last few years, mainly against his erstwhile associates in the world called neoconservatism. This book presents itself as a "manifesto" for an American future of "liberal nationalism" that will succeed the various phases in which a "white overclass" has manipulated economic and political power in its own interests. Much of the argument has a familiarly leftist tone, but Mr. Lind works hard at demonstrating that he is not the running dog of any known

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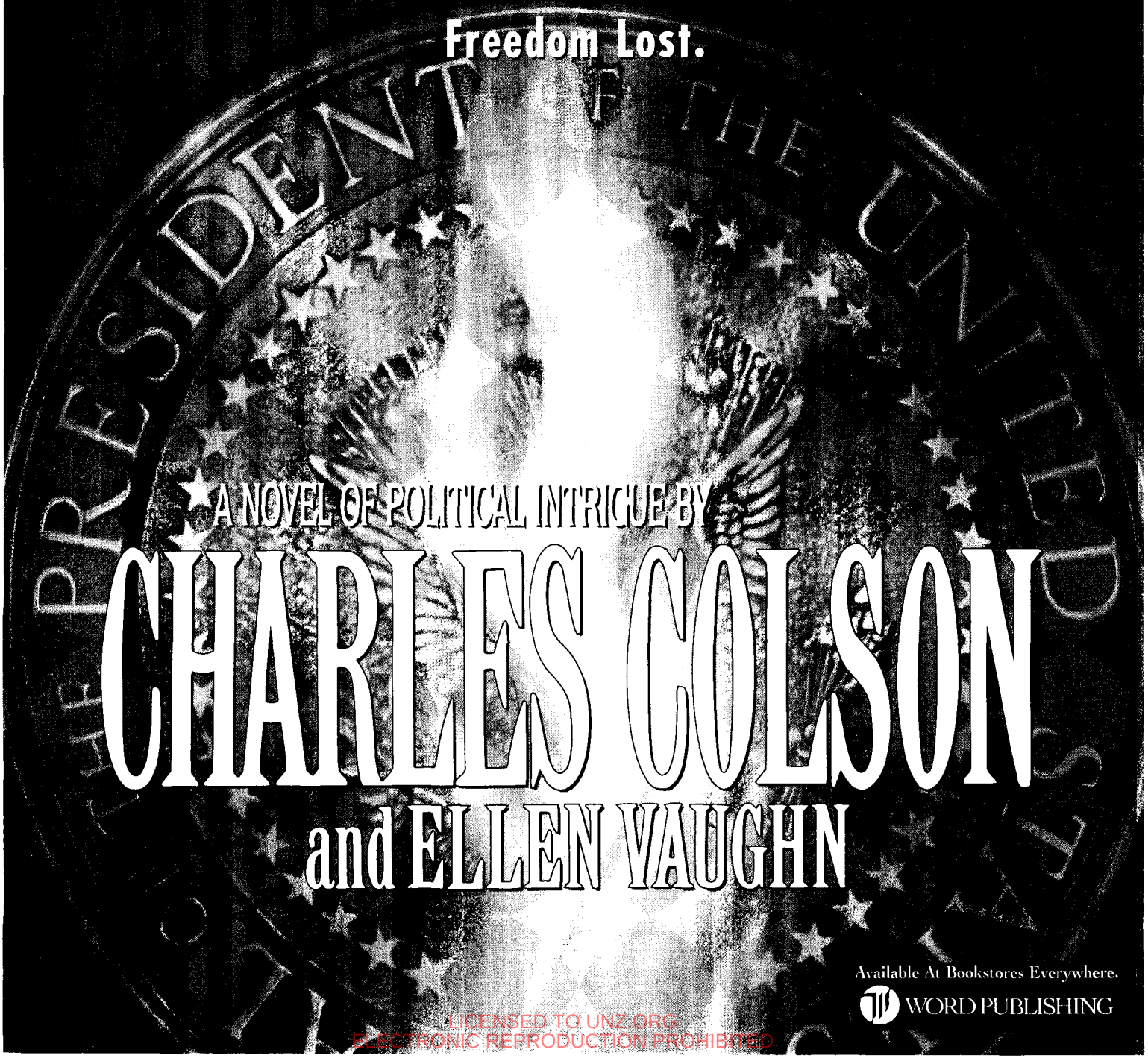

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ideological clique. He has some intelligent things to say about the madnesses of multiculturalism and affirmative action, and rightly deplores the national preemption of questions such as abortion and religion in public education. Some readers, however, will no doubt find the author's relentless straining to be singular and, above all, provocative rather tiresome. On the positive side, his passions are for nationalism and statist action. He calls the latter liberalism rather than socialism, but his advocacy of massive government programs favoring an "unsubtle, crude, old-fashioned redistribution of wealth, through taxation and public spending" is unmistakably socialist in inspiration and consequence. Fortunately, it seems highly improbable that, in the light of recent history, many people will be inclined to take such proposals seriously. On the other hand, memories are short, as witness a young author who apparently sees nothing terribly problematic in advocating what might aptly be described as national socialism or socialist nationalism, albeit with benign intentions.

THE GREENING OF PROTESTANT THOUGHT. By ROBERT BOOTH FOWLER. *University of North Carolina Press. 242 pp. $14.95.*

A political scientist at the University of Wisconsin reflects in a moderately critical way on varieties of Protestant thought and activism regarding matters environmental. Focusing on differences between "mainliners" and "fundamentalists," Fowler ends on a note of tempered political hope, urging Christians to plant their confidence on the more solid ground of God's promise to keep faith with His creation.

VISIONS OF ORDER: THE CULTURAL CRISIS OF OUR TIME. By RICHARD M. WEAVER. *Intercollegiate Studies Institute. 176 pp. $12.95 paper.*

After publishing his well-known *Ideas Have Consequences* in 1948 and his classic *The Ethics of Rhetoric* in 1953, Richard Weaver composed a third work in which he hoped to draw together all his themes in a single synthesis. Published a year after his early death in 1963, *Visions of Order* fell still-born from the press, selling only three thousand copies in the ten years before it fell out of print. Intercollegiate Studies Institute has now republished Weaver's text as a handsome trade paperback, in the hope that the book will find in the nineties the audience it failed to find in the sixties. In eight essays, Weaver argues the serious decay of Western civilization—not, indeed, to promote a Spenglerian thesis of inevitable decay, but to show the necessity and possibility of restoring civilization's losses. *Visions of Order,* precisely because it relentlessly drives to the heart of things, remains a powerful analysis by a serious conservative thinker.

SAINT PETER: A BIOGRAPHY. By MICHAEL GRANT. *Scribner. 212 pp. $23.*

A balanced account of what can be known about St. Peter based on recent historical scholarship without reference to religious and theological questions.

CEASE FIRE: SEARCHING FOR SANITY IN AMERICA'S CULTURE WARS. By TOM SINE. *Eerdmans. 312 pp. $14.99.*

Ironically, in calling for a cease fire in the culture wars, the author, a "progressive evangelical," enters the fray fully armed for rhetorical combat. To be sure, to protect his left flank he lobs a few random handgrenades in the direction of what he calls the PC left (e.g., the feminist RE-imaginers). But for the most part the book consists of well-aimed, highly concentrated fire on the Christian right and the Christian Coalition. He tries to hide his partisanship but just can't pull it off. He's scared out of his wits over Republican political ascendancy and he shows no willingness to seriously engage responsible conservative Christian voices in public life. And then, if one has any doubts, he gives it all away by concluding the book with an extended advertisement for *Cry for Renewal,* a document written by Jim Wallis, editor of the evangelical left-wing journal *Sojourners.* When the writings of Wallis and other evangelicals long associated with the Christian left (yes, there was an organization called "Evangelicals for McGovern") are offered up as a "radical biblical way that transcends the highly politicized agendas" of the Christian right and the PC left, one can't help but think that the whole thing is more than a little disingenuous.

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THE PUBLIC SQUARE

A Continuing Survey of Religion and Public Life

Richard John Neuhaus

Alien Nation

A truly odd thing has happened this past year. Well, of course many odd things have happened, but nothing else quite like this readily comes to mind. We are witnessing a very major policy shift, with partisans on all sides making high-octane moral noises, and yet with few people fessing up to what is really happening. A couple of years ago, *National Review* embarked on a campaign to persuade Americans that the current level of immigration to this country, legal and illegal, is dangerously out of control. Almost everybody who has commented on this debate has noted the oddity that the campaign was led by two Brits, Peter Brimelow of *Forbes*, who is now a U.S. citizen, and John O'Sullivan, editor of *National Review*, who is not. Most commentators have complained that this is clearly an instance of people who, having been allowed on board, now want to pull up the ladder and deny others the same opportunity.

Conservatives are by no means united on the immigration question, and for a while it was thought that this could occasion a split that would jeopardize what appears to be the conservative political ascendancy. The *Wall Street Journal*, for example, could not be more bullish on immigration, making the argument that massive immigration is an almost unqualified blessing for the economy. The *Journal* has editorially proposed (it is not clear that the proposal is meant to be taken at face value) a constitutional amendment declaring that the U.S. has open borders. The more immigrants the better. It seems now that the *Journal* is losing, if it has not already definitively lost, this debate. Of course, in politics nothing is definitive as in forever.

The Brimelow-O'Sullivan case is that America is a nation much as other nations are nations. This is posited against the idea of American exceptionalism which proposes that America is, in the phrase of Ben Wattenberg, "the first universal nation." Writers such as Wattenberg contend that America is basically constituted by a set of ideas of universal validity, and whoever subscribes to these ideas is, in effect, an American, whether or not they actually live here. So they might as well live here, if they want to. *National Review* counters that a universal nation is a contradiction in terms. Any nation is a nation among nations, each being defined by not being the other, and by the culture and experience of a particular people. I have engaged in an extensive exchange with O'Sullivan on these questions in the pages of *National Review* (February 6, 1995) and will not repeat what I wrote there.

Suffice it that, as the debate has been structured, I come down on the pro-immigration side, with qualifications. Yes, immigration policy is out of control; illegal immigration needs to be sharply stemmed, even if it cannot be entirely stopped; and the effective assimilation of immigrants requires major changes in welfare and education policies in order to avoid the welfare dependency syndrome and the cultural balkanization of "multiculturalism." In addition, affirmative action programs should not apply to immigrants; indeed they should be junked for everybody. At the same time, I have contended, the idea that America is an "immigrant nation" is a critically important part of our national story; there would be a steep cultural and moral price to be paid for denying others the opportunity of immigration; and, contra Brimelow-O'Sullivan, it is neither plausible nor desirable to reconceptualize America as the continuation of the British cultural imperium. In these pages I argued that the real problem of "aliens" among us is represented not by immigrants but by the urban underclass and the intellectual overclass, both of whom are profoundly alienated from the rights and responsibilities of the American experience (see "The Aliens Among Us," The Public Square, August/September 1993).

Race and Culture

The centerpiece in this debate is Peter Brimelow's *Alien Nation: Common Sense About America's Immigration Disaster* (Random House). Brimelow has an impressive command of the relevant facts, and

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writes in the accessible and aggressive manner of a debater out to score points. And score he does. This is a very important book; anybody who wants to get in on the immigration debate has to read it. It has been widely reviewed, more negatively than positively, but the curious thing is that even the hostile reviews generally end up conceding much of Brimelow's argument. For instance, Michael Lind reviewed it in the *New Yorker* of April 24, 1995, and, after making all the appropriate liberal sounds, concludes (as though he were disagreeing with Brimelow) that we should institute an extended moratorium on immigration in order to give the country a chance to assimilate the many millions who have arrived here in the last two decades. (Immigration, legal and illegal, is now at the level of almost two million persons per year, nearly twice as many as the last high point in 1907.) In his *New Yorker* review, Lind also attacks my comments in these pages, underscoring, as is his wont, that his own unique thought patterns cannot be accommodated by existing views on this or any other matter.

The most frequent criticism of *Alien Nation* is that Brimelow includes also a racialist (many say racist) argument that, without major changes in immigration policy, whites will in the not-so-distant future be a minority in America. In response to the passionate objections to such painfully incorrect considerations, Brimelow persistently asks the question, "Shouldn't the American people be consulted about what kind of nation they want?" It is an eminently fair question. Do Americans think it would be a good idea if, in say the year 2050, the country's population is 350 million, with whites in the minority and the great bulk of the increase being non-European in origin? Some critics of Brimelow clearly think such questions should not be asked, apparently because they assume that Americans are racists who will come up with the wrong answer. The picture is complicated by the fact that native-born black Americans feel more strongly than whites that there are too many immigrants.

The Bearers of the Cultural Plague

It was, I believe, wrongheaded for Brimelow to feature the race factor as he does. The American inhibition about addressing the race factor is not, as Brimelow seems to think, simply a matter of self-delusion or hypocrisy. Policies based on race-consciousness have bedeviled the American story, whether in their malign (slavery and segregation) or benign (quotas and affirmative action) forms. One need not deny the importance of race in everyday life in order to insist that public policy decisions should, as much as possible, be color blind. In fact, the reason for so insisting is precisely that race is so important. Brimelow's raising of the race question, however, may be one reason that the book has received so much attention. It may also be the reason why, if Brimelow's argument wins in the political arena (which seems more than possible), few people will give him or his book much credit in helping to transform U.S. immigration policy.

Of course Brimelow is right in claiming that there is a great deal of conscious and unconscious dishonesty in American discussions about race. (Yes, dishonesty can be so thoroughly internalized as to be unconscious.) Although the question regularly gets reconfigured, race is still the "American dilemma" that Gunnar Myrdal wrote about in 1944. Brimelow is simply tone-deaf to the American ways of calculated and constructive circumlocution on matters racial, dismissing such practice as nothing more than hypocrisy. Which is a shame, since his argument does not require the appeal to race. Many have become persuaded of the argument despite its appeal to race. Of course, Brimelow can respond that they are persuaded, at least in part, *because* of the racial factor but are not honest enough to admit it. Obviously, there is no way of proving the point one way or another.

Brimelow makes the telling point that, whatever may be the protocols for discussing race in America, there are a good many Americans on the pro-immigration side who violate them with apparent impunity. The proponents of sundry versions of multiculturalism do not hesitate to be very explicit about race, and to be stridently polemical against one racial group, namely, whites. Numerous textbooks, television shows, and movies are uninhibited in celebrating their version of a "pluralistic" America in which whites are, or will soon be, a minority. In this picture of the future, the real enemy is, of course, Western culture, with whites portrayed as the bearers of that plague.

If one side gets a free ride in pushing that racial-cultural line, is it fair to charge those who disagree with racism? Brimelow's point is that the multiculturalist proponents of open immigration first raised and continue to press the question of race, and therefore their claim that he has injected race into the debate is a case of the pot calling the kettle black, as we were once allowed to say. Again and again, he returns to his bottom-line question, Shouldn't the American people—citizens of every race and cultural background—be asked what kind of America they want for their grandchildren? It is disturbingly clear that many of Brimelow's critics have made up their minds that that question should be answered in the negative.

Race aside, Brimelow makes a convincing case that existing immigration policy is a shambles, if not the "disaster" claimed in his subtitle. The question of immigration should be submitted to public debate and political decision. Most Americans likely think it self-evident that a country should have some standards for deciding who is admitted and who can become a citizen. Useful skills, law-abidingness,

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literacy, and a reasonable assurance that those admitted will not go on the public dole are among obvious criteria. Those who take seriously the Judeo-Christian character of our cultural story might want to propose policies that tilt in favor of people who share that story, although any attempt to do that directly would no doubt run into a legal buzzsaw. In this discussion, I am not overlooking the fact that an interesting moral argument can be made that America has an obligation to let in as many of the world's people as want to come. It is an interesting argument that does not, I believe, stand up under close examination in an ethics seminar, and in the political arena it is a nonstarter.

The immigration reform of 1965 has not turned out the way its promoters promised it would. Nothing new in that. Whatever is done now will also have unintended consequences that a Peter Brimelow (or maybe Peter Brimelow himself) will thirty years down the road declare to be a "disaster." But in a democracy the people are supposed to have a say in the policy disasters that are visited upon them. That this is currently happening on immigration is in large part due to the enterprise of Brimelow-O'Sullivan, although all the people who are now saying that "of course" something must be done about immigration are not going to give them much thanks. After all, America is not an extension of the British imperium!

The provisional resolution (and in politics everything is provisional) may be that immigration is brought under somewhat more rational control in a manner that sustains the conviction that we are and ought to be a nation of immigrants. Sustaining the conviction requires sustaining a generous level of immigration. The meaning of generous—and the difference between generosity and carelessness—is now being submitted to public debate. The outcome will almost certainly be fewer immigrants, legal and illegal, and greater attention to their successful assimilation. This can happen without rousing the furies of nativism, and without subverting the perception and reality of America as a bearer of universal aspiration. At least we may hope that it can happen.

FT

The Church and the Press

Protestants, Catholics, Jews—they all complain about the press. Of course, everybody complains about the press (including the press), so why should religion be different? Fr. Avery Dulles has some helpful reflections on this perennial topic. He is speaking about the Catholic Church and the press, but what he has to say applies, mutatis mutandis, across the religious board.

"The secular press, because it belongs to the world and is directed toward a worldly audience, will never be the ideal organ for transmitting the Christian message," writes Fr. Dulles, in typically understated manner, in the Jesuit journal *America*. But the secular press ought not therefore to be ignored. "Without prejudice to the religious press, it must be recognized that many Catholics learn what is happening in their church primarily, or in great part, from the secular media. It is also true that the Church has a responsibility to communicate not only with its own members but with the general public. The popular media of communication have a legitimate interest in religious news. It would be neither desirable nor possible to keep the Catholic Church out of the secular press."

The Church, however, has not been "conspicuously succesful in its relations with the press"—the blame for which is commonly placed either (by Catholics) on the anti-Catholic bias of journalists or (by journalists) on Church leaders incapable of presenting the Church's story in a proper light. "Neither of these contributing factors can be denied," Fr. Dulles observes, "but the real sources of the difficulty lie deeper." The nature of the Church's message and the power of the media to communicate are necessarily in tension, for at least seven reasons, which are worth enumerating:

(1) The mystery of faith calls for an approach by reverence, by worship, while the investigative mode of the press makes for irreverence. (2) The Church, convinced of the permanent validity of revelation, seeks continuity with the past, while the press thrives on novelty—and consequently presents a picture of the Church in constant turmoil. (3) The Church seeks to promote unity, while the press specializes in disagreement—and gives the impression that every point of dogma is hotly disputed. (4) The Church is interested in spiritual realities, while the press seeks more tangible material—and thus tends to report Church events mainly when they have to do with sex, politics, or power. (5) The Church is hierarchical, while the press is ideologically egalitarian, and thus lionizes even marginal dissidents. (6) The teachings of the Church are usually complex and phrased in subtle theological vocabularies hundreds of years in developing, while the press wants brevity and simplicity—a.k.a. soundbites. (7) The Church seeks to persuade its hearers of the truth of revelation, while the press addresses a general and skeptical audience—and is typically hostile to claims of truth in matters spiritual and moral.

All the above does not mean that there are not anti-Catholic, and anti-Christian, journalists out

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there. There are, lots of them. And it does not mean that Church officials are not dumb in dealing with the press. They are, often. But Fr. Dulles' point is that there are built-in tensions between the Church and the press, and, while we should work at better understanding all around, the tensions will not, and should not, go away.

FT

HOLY MINIMALISM

Bach, Brahms, Beethoven, Mozart—with those names one has named most of the great classical music in existence, and for our money the same is true if you name only Bach and Mozart. Why should this be? It has been a puzzlement to me ever since I was a teenager. Whatever else might be said about the failures and barbarities of this century, surely one of the most telling judgments is that, with slight exceptions here or there, it has produced no great classical music. On any given day there are dozens of concerts in New York, and directors are always trying to slip in something "contemporary." One suspects that for them, as for the audience, it is a matter of duty, of insisting that it simply can't be true that mankind has lost its capacity to produce music of consequence. So people patiently put up with the boredom of the contemporary until, having done our duty, the concert gets back to the good stuff—meaning Bach, Brahms, etc.

It seems just possible that this doleful circumstance may be changing. Writing in *Commentary*, critic Terry Teachout sees something like a revival of the musical wisdom that several generations of the avant garde tried so hard to stifle. "Musical styles do not die out of their own accord: they must be replaced. The decline of interest in American-style minimalism is due in part to the emergence of a new style of classical composition that has found a comparably large popular audience. There is no commonly accepted term for this style, though it is sometimes referred to as 'European mysticism' or 'holy minimalism.' Its chief proponents are Henryk Górecki (b. 1933), the Estonian Arvo Pärt (b. 1935), and the British John Tavener (b. 1944). All three men are intensely religious, are associated with orthodox faiths, and write both secular scores and music intended for liturgical usage; all three use repetition in a manner broadly reminiscent of the American minimalists."

It is not without significance that these three have sensibilities refined by the experience with the totalitarianism of our time. Pärt is Estonian, Górecki is Polish (and a friend of John Paul II), and Tavener, while British, is a convert to Eastern Orthodoxy. The superficiality of Western musical sophistication—or what has for several decades been taken for sophistication—holds little appeal for them. Not, of course, that all composers of this century have been caught up in the swirling superficiality. As Teachout notes, composers such as Stravinsky, Bartók, Hindemith, and Shostakovich embraced their places in the great tradition of Western art "and sought to expand the frontiers of tonality, rather than arrogantly seeking to create 'new' musical languages out of whole cloth."

Yet it is possible that with the "holy minimalists" something really progressive is happening, a rediscovery of what was so long forgotten or denied. Teachout writes: "It is also of no small interest that the composers who have done the most in recent years to revive the language of tonality should all be religious (not excluding Glass, a convert to Tibetan Buddhism). Regardless of one's own beliefs, there is something undeniably satisfying about the fact that the world of classical music at the end of the twentieth century is dominated by three men who can say of tonality what G. K. Chesterton said of his rediscovery of religious faith: 'I freely confess all the idiotic ambitions of the end of the nineteenth century. I did, like all other solemn little boys, try to be in advance of the age. Like them, I tried to be some ten minutes in advance of the truth. And I found that I was eighteen hundred years behind it. . . . I am the man who with the utmost daring discovered what had been discovered before.'"

FT

WHEN SILENCE IS CRIMINAL

"Why are you so obsessed with these questions? Give it a rest." A good many of our readers have probably received such counsel—whether the question be abortion, euthanasia, the genocidal murder of Christians in the Sudan, human rights violations in China, or some other matter worthy of obsession. Arthur Koestler was one of the great defenders of public decency in this century, and in January 1944 he published an article in the *New York Times Magazine* that was titled "On Disbelieving Atrocities." It offers ever-pertinent insight into the experience of those who are "obsessed" with great horror. A refugee from Hitler's continental New Order who was then living in England, Koestler tried to tell the world about the atrocities perpetrated by the Nazi regime. Koestler described himself as belonging to a group of "escaped victims or eyewitnesses . . . who, haunted by our memories,

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go on screaming on the wireless, yelling at you in newspapers and in public meetings, theaters and cinemas. Now and then we succeed in reaching your ear for a moment." Koestler noted: "I know it each time it happens by a certain dumb wonder on your faces. . . . But it only lasts a minute. You shake yourselves like puppies who got their fur wet; then the transparent screen descends again, protected by the dream barrier which stifles all sound."

"Give it a rest. Your relentlessness is disruptive of civil discourse." Then and now, the "obsessed" cannot accept such counsel. It is very much worthwhile to quote Koestler at length: "We, the screamers, have been at it now for about ten years. We started on the night when the epileptic van der Lubbe set fire to the German Parliament; we said that if you don't quench those flames at once, they will spread all over the world; you thought we were maniacs. At present we have the mania of trying to tell you about the killing—by hot steam, mass-electrocution, and live burial—of the total Jewish population of Europe. So far three million have died. It is the greatest mass killing in recorded history; and it goes on daily, hourly, as regularly as the ticking of your watch. I have photographs before me on the desk while I am writing this, and that accounts for my emotion and bitterness. People died to smuggle them out of Poland; they thought it was worthwhile. The facts have been published in pamphlets, books, newspapers, magazines, and what not. But the other day I met one of the best-known American journalists over here. He told me that in the course of some recent public-opinion survey nine out of ten average American citizens, when asked whether they believed that the Nazis commit atrocities, answered that it was all propaganda lies, and that they don't believe a word of it. As to this country, I have been lecturing now for three years to the troops, and their attitude is the same. They don't believe in concentration camps; they don't believe in the starved children of Greece, in the shot hostages in France, in the mass graves in Poland; they have never heard of Lidice, Treblinka, or Belzec; you can convince them for an hour, then they shake themselves, their mental self-defense begins to work, and in a week the shrug of incredulity has returned like a reflex temporarily weakened by a shock. Clearly all this is becoming a mania with me and my like. Clearly we must suffer from some morbid obsession, whereas the others are healthy and normal. But the characteristic symptom of maniacs is that they lose contact with reality and live in a fantasy world. So, perhaps, it is the other way round; perhaps it is we, the screamers, who react in a sound and healthy way to the reality which surrounds us, whereas you are the neurotics who totter about in a screened fantasy world because you lack the faculty to face the facts. Were it not so, this war would have been avoided, and those murdered within sight of your day-dreaming eyes would still be alive."

FT

Heroes and Heroines

She is a very good woman, there's no doubt about that. But she is spiritually straitened by the intensity of her concern. A heroine of the pro-life cause, she is on the picket lines in front of the abortuaries, running the phone lines to get out the vote, and doing many other good things. Yet there is this drivenness. "How can we just go on," she asks, "as if we did not know that four thousand innocent children are being killed every day in this country alone?" It is a question more often asked than many might think. It is all too much.

For more than twenty-five years now, I've been speaking to pro-life groups all over the place, and I frequently end up with a line from T. S. Eliot. (I have a higher estimate of Eliot's faith than does my friend J. Bottum.) The line is from "East Coker": "For us there is only the trying. The rest is not our business." I've noticed in audiences that there are often people who, as penance for whatever sins, have come out to listen to me before, and you can tell that they see the line coming. It's a fine line, I think, reflecting not resignation but an acknowledgment that ultimately we cannot set the world right. Only God can do that, and He will.

Christian devotion should not be driven; discipleship should not desiccate. The call to follow him is an invitation to splendor, to live in truth, in *veritatis splendor*. Chesterton understood that. Even in the face of the horror of it all, it is a great sin, he said, to call a green leaf gray. There is no place for whining or self-pity. Precisely in the face of the encroaching darkness, one defiantly lifts a tankard in tribute to the Crucified King. Robust is the word that comes to mind at the mention of Chesterton. Some dismiss his as a "manly" or even "muscular" Christianity, but that seems not such a bad thing in this wimpish world. The better term is adventuresome. He knew that there is a wildness to God's mercy, and a wildness to being Christian in the world. It infected his view of the Church careening through history, coping with one thing after another. Recall the fine passage from *Orthodoxy*:

"She swerved to left and right, so exactly as to avoid enormous obstacles. She left on one hand the huge bulk of Arianism, buttressed by all the worldly powers to make Christianity too worldly. The next instant she was swerving to avoid an orientalism, which would have made it too unworldly. The orthodox Church

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never took the tame course or accepted the conventions; the orthodox Church was never respectable. It would have been easier to have accepted the earthly power of the Arians. It would have been easy, in the Calvinistic seventeenth century, to fall into the bottomless pit of predestination. It is easy to be a madman: it is easy to be a heretic. . . . To have fallen into any of those open traps of error and exaggeration which fashion after fashion and sect after sect set along the historic path of Christendom—that would indeed have been obvious and tame. But to have avoided them all has been one whirling adventure; and in my vision the heavenly chariot flies thundering through the ages, the dull heresies sprawling and prostrate, the wild truth reeling but erect."

Bracing stuff, that. And Chesterton was by no means alone. The other day I came across this Chestertonian flurry in Charles Péguy, the great French poet. Péguy (d. 1914) was at times a revolutionary socialist; he wandered away from Christianity, and was then drawn back to a wild vision of the Christian as embodied in nature and history, no longer afraid of the dark because that is where the Incarnate God has hidden himself. Christians can afford to be heroes and heroines. Of heroism Péguy wrote: "Heroism is essentially a skill, a condition and an act of sound health, good spirits, joy, even merriment, almost of frivolous playfulness—in any case, an act of pleasure, well-being, an act of the unconstrained, relaxed, productive person, of security, self-mastery, self-possession, almost (so to speak) of custom and routine, of good manners. It is without any posturing or ulterior motive, and, above all, without any self-pity; without sighs and lamentations, without the wish to win a reward. The person who only wants to win is a bad player. What makes a great player is the will to play. He would far rather play without winning than win without playing."

But it seems to do no good to tell my friend about Péguy's vision of life as a noble game played in the presence of God. Or to ask her to join in lifting a defiant tankard in the face of all that would drain away life's joy. Her devotion is earnest and driven, as though she carries the weight of the world's wrong. There is no doubt that she believes and she loves—more than Chesterton or Péguy perhaps, certainly more than I. Heroism has many faces. There are many ways to be a saint.

FT

THE WORK OF GOD

The Ku Klux Klan, the Michigan Militia, and Scientology. To hear some folk tell it, Opus Dei (The Work of God) belongs to that company, except it is bigger and more dangerous. Opus Dei is, they say, a secretive, cult-like organization that is running a vast international conspiracy with unlimited funding and tentacles reaching into the most unlikely centers of power. In short, Opus Dei is "controversial."

So how does one go about making up his mind about a movement such as this? I have no connections with Opus Dei, but over the last ten years I have developed friendships with a number of people, priests and laity, who are involved in The Work. For example, Dr. Joaquin Navarro-Valls, the communications director for the Vatican. He is an extraordinarily personable gentleman, and we have had long conversations about, inter alia, the importance of Opus Dei in his life. He does not push the movement, but speaks in a matter-of-fact and utterly persuasive manner about how Opus Dei has helped him to understand and sustain his vocation as a Christian layman. And there are others in Opus Dei who speak in a similar vein. But in making up one's mind there is no denying that a privileged witness is Pope John Paul II. He has been publicly and consistently supportive of Opus Dei, granting it in 1982 the singular status of a "personal prelature," which means the jurisdiction of its bishop is not limited to a region but includes everyone in Opus Dei. In 1992 he beatified the founder of Opus Dei, Msgr. Josemaria Escriva, who died in 1975. The Pope has spoken of Opus Dei as an instrument of energetic orthodoxy that is a great gift for the renewal of the Church and its mission in the world. Of course that does not mean that Catholics must agree. Orthodox Catholics who otherwise have the greatest respect for the Pope have had bad experiences with Opus Dei and think that maybe he does not always know what the organization is actually doing. Be that as it may, in forming one's approach to Opus Dei, the strong and consistent affirmation of John Paul II cannot help but carry very considerable weight.

Since it was established in Spain in 1928, there have been a slew of books attacking Opus Dei, and we are told that more are in the works. For those of a leftist disposition, it is sufficient damnation that Opus Dei members were prominent in the government of General Franco. It is seldom mentioned that those same Opus Dei members were key players in Spain's successful transition to democracy. Today Opus Dei has about seventy-seven thousand members in eighty-three countries, including fifteen hundred priests and fifteen bishops.

One cannot emphasize too strongly that Opus Dei understands its mission to be the revival of the lay apostolate. While priests do the things that priests do in their capacity as spiritual directors, Opus Dei members frequently describe themselves as

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anticlerical. Not in the sense that they are opposed to clergy, but in that they oppose the old clericalist notion that lay people are second-class (at best) members of the Church. Opus Dei members sometimes suggest that the movement is responsible for Vatican II's lifting up of the dignity of the lay vocation, which is undoubtedly going one claim too far. But it is ironic that some of the harshest critics, who think of themselves as great champions of the laity, have not recognized the similar inspiration in Opus Dei.

The Work became active in North America about twenty years ago, and now has approximately three thousand members and runs sixty-four centers (often residences near major universities), five high schools, and several retreats. The Opus Dei presence has not always been welcomed by Catholic ministries on campuses, and this has occasioned some notable controversies. The cause, it seems, is sometimes personality conflict, sometimes a too aggressive approach by Opus Dei, and, in a number of cases, resentment by super-progressive priests of a movement that proposes a different, and deeply conservative, way of being Catholic. The charge heard again and again is that Opus Dei is secretive and cult-like in recruiting new members.

The Disillusioned

These and other charges were again aired in a major article this past year in *America*, the Jesuit magazine (February 25, 1995). The issue had a lurid red cover with nothing but the words "Opus Dei" in sharp relief, and I approached it with the expectation of reading another slash-and-burn attack on the movement. It turned out, however, to be a reasonably temperate and balanced treatment—in comparison, that is, with the usual stuff on Opus Dei. A great deal of attention was given to the testimony of people who had had unhappy experiences with Opus Dei, and to the views of Kenneth Woodward, religion reporter for *Newsweek*, often a fair-minded fellow, who has a long-standing hostility to Opus Dei.

Every movement has people who left for one reason or another, and, as is the case with jilted lovers, it is hard to know how to evaluate their testimony. They complain that they were recruited under the guise of friendship, that they were not told at first what they would be getting into, that women are separated from and subordinate to men, and so forth. What it apparently amounts to is that some people discovered that Opus Dei was not for them and were disappointed and embittered about that. Certainly Opus Dei is demanding. A full-fledged "numerary," for instance, makes a commitment to celibacy, lives in an Opus Dei center, and follows a rigorous daily schedule of prayer and spiritual discipline. Clearly, it is not for everyone. But the critics say it is more than that, that Opus Dei is a cult. A few parents unhappy with their children's association with Opus Dei have even formed an Opus Dei Awareness Network, and make the usual claims about "brainwashing" and the like.

I know some of these parents and cannot help but feel considerable sympathy. One wonders, however, if in some cases they are not experiencing, in intensified form, the pain of recognizing that their children are growing up and therefore, in a certain necessary sense, away from them. The mother of a young man I will here call Billy relates in tears how he went away to university, came into contact with Opus Dei in his third year, and now has decided to commit himself as a numerary. "He's completely alienated from us." "His father and I had such plans for him." "He's not my Billy that I knew four years ago." Sympathy yes, but tempered sympathy. He strikes one as a sensible young man, mature for his years, and enormously grateful for the life he has found with Opus Dei. He insists he is not alienated from his parents, but every contact with them, especially with his mother, is an ongoing and ugly hassle over Opus Dei. "She can't accept that I must do with my life what I believe God wants me to do."

It is an intergenerational conflict that has been around from the beginning of time. Innumerable young people, including recognized saints, have caught a vision of radical discipleship and pursued a course vehemently opposed by parents and family. This should come as no surprise to people who follow the One who said, "He who loves father or mother more than me . . ." It is especially odd that this conflict should figure so large in a Jesuit magazine, for it is within living memory that a more demanding Society of Jesus was frequently accused of recruiting young men to a pattern of discipleship that pitted them against parents who had other plans for their children's lives.

The *America* article also highlights the fact that the formal "constitutions" of Opus Dei are available in Latin and Spanish but not in English. This is taken as evidence that the organization is concealing something from outsiders, and even from its own members. Opus Dei responds that the Holy See, for some unknown reason, does not want the constitutions translated into English, although some members have told me that they are being translated. They add that the constitutions are merely legal stipulations, and that they contain nothing that members and prospective members are not told. In any event, the constitutions are readily available in Latin, and we know that there are still Jesuits who can read Latin. If there is anything they find objectionable in the constitutions, the critics of Opus Dei have ample opportunities to publicize their objections.

So why the intense, sometimes venomous, attacks on Opus Dei? In my experience, the members of Opus Dei are not secretive, but they are sometimes

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very defensive. That is perhaps understandable, given the nature and persistence of the attacks, but it is still a problem, and Opus Dei members with whom I have spoken generally recognize it as a problem. Then too, Opus Dei sometimes presents itself as the saving remnant of orthodoxy in a Church that is largely apostate. This is unattractive and, if not entirely untrue, greatly exaggerated. But such exaggeration is not surprising among people who feel that they are part of a rare, comprehensive, and commanding vision of what it means to serve Christ and his Church with the entirety of their being. Of course there is the danger of fanaticism, but it seems to me that Opus Dei is keenly aware of that, and its program of spiritual direction assiduously guards against it. People who think that the way to avoid fanaticism is never to surrender oneself to a commanding truth live desiccated lives and end up breeding their own, and usually less interesting, fanaticisms.

The opposition to Opus Dei cannot be explained without at least some reference to jealousy. Competition and jealousy among religious movements in the Catholic Church is nothing new, and some Opus Dei members are not hesitant to suggest that theirs is now the role in the Church once played by the Jesuits. The Jesuits, who were once viewed as the elite corps of the papacy, have in recent decades had a sharply attenuated relationship to the hierarchical leadership of the Church. The famous "fourth vow" of allegiance to the pope is now frequently understood by Jesuits as a vow to the papacy in general—meaning the papacy as they think it ought to be. (The articles on Jesuits and Jesuit spirituality in the new *Encyclopedia of Catholicism*, edited by Richard McBrien, make no mention of obedience to the pope.)

It is not surprising that this pontificate has looked with particular favor on Opus Dei, Focolare, Legionaries of Christ, and similar movements that have sprung up to champion the magisterium's understanding of the renewal called for by Vatican II. As for Opus Dei itself, it is, as the Catholic Church views things, still a very young movement, and in this country its work has hardly gotten underway. From the general media and from liberal Catholics, it is not going to get a fair shake for a very long time, if ever. Opus Dei has, as they say, a big image problem, and it will have to learn to live with that without being intimidated by it. Over time, as more people became acquainted with the people who are Opus Dei, and as Opus Dei members engage in works that are generally respected, the day may come when Opus Dei will no longer be routinely described as "controversial." And maybe not. There are some things eminently worth being controversial for. Meanwhile, one cannot help but be impressed by the people who believe that they have found in Opus Dei a way to make an unqualified gift of their lives to Christ and his Church.

FT

WHILE WE'RE AT IT

■ The general secretary of the Presbyterian Church of East Africa, Samuel Mwaniki, has to recall twenty-four retired male pastors to run parishes where the people refused to accept women pastors. "Mwaniki lamented that many African Christians lived in the past, characterized by gender prejudice," according to *Ecumenical News International*. "Once ordained, nothing makes women lesser mortals in the church," said Mwaniki. Not a happy thought for women who are not ordained.

■ It's been a long time since we mentioned it, so once again: Feminists for Life is a lively and growing organization that is making a big dent on the stereotype that pro-woman equals pro-choice. They've recently upgraded their newsletter, *The American Feminist*, and you might want to take a look at it. They can be reached at 733 Fifteenth Street NW, Suite 1100, Washington, D.C. 20005.

■ The explosion of Protestantism in Latin America should not be confused with the Latin American Council of Churches (CLAI), which recently held its third general assembly in Chile. This is mainly an assembly of what we here call mainline churches, and there are called "historic churches." Liberation theologians such as Jose Miguez Bonino and C. Rene Padillo may have tempered their Marxist enthusiasms, but they addressed the assembly on the dangers of Roman Catholic "Constantinianism." The more-radical-than-thou Brazilian Methodist professor, Nancy Cardoso Pereira, played the feminist and multiculturalist cards, receiving warm ovations for her call to abandon the premise that "there is only one God, one Lord Jesus Christ, one Holy Spirit." She urged openness to the many gods and goddesses worshiped in Latin America (e.g., Pachamama, Tupa, Olorum, and Zambi). All excoriated capitalism and other evils of Yanqui imperialism. Ecumenical unity of sorts is achieved, it seems, by opposition to the Catholic and Yanqui threats. For the first time, CLAI decided not to invite any representatives of the Catholic Church in any capacity. That was not very nice, but some Catholic leaders admit to not worrying a great deal about what CLAI does or does not do. Only 1 percent of the CLAI budget comes from Latin America, with 98 percent coming from European and Yanqui churches. An article in the *Christian Century* takes note of that "embarrassing reality" and concludes,

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"As the prospects of foreign funding wane, CLAI may begin to lose its ability to function." The author does not say whether that should be cause for regret.

■ In the *New York Review of Books* Howard Gardner of Harvard discusses a number of books related to behaviorism, cognitive science, and the connection between mind and matter. He notes that, almost beginning with Noam Chomsky's devastation of B. F. Skinner's 1959 book *Verbal Behavior*, behaviorism has had rough sledding. Gardner concludes with this anecdote and reflection: "In *Verbal Behavior* Skinner recalls an evening in 1934 when he found himself sitting next to the great philosopher Alfred North Whitehead at dinner. Skinner explained his new ideas enthusiastically to Whitehead, who listened with some sympathy. After a while, Whitehead said, 'Let me see you account for my behavior as I sit here saying, "No black scorpion is falling upon this table."' Skinner reports that the next morning he drew up plans for the study reported in his book a quarter of a century later. We now know that Skinner's effort was flawed. What remains to be seen is whether the writers reviewed here or their associates, individually or collectively, can shed more light on the question Whitehead asked—a question about the sources of human distinctiveness, imagination, and playfulness. Perhaps an entirely different perspective will be required."

■ In the debates over the National Endowment for the Arts some sharp words have been exchanged. But perhaps none quite so sharp as the *Spectator*'s Auberon Waugh on the state of contemporary art *tout court*. As in most of his commentaries, the Americans are the prime malefactors. "Thus the American abstract artist Frank Stella describes his important modern masterpiece *Six Mile Bottom*: 'There at least seems to be a bilateral symmetry in all my work. The parts relate to and they are balanced simply and conventionally, but without being relational they don't relate to any other part.' We continue to listen to this twaddle—and a few people even pretend to find some meaning in it—for a reason which few of us may guess. The Modern Movement, which effectively ran out of all genuine vitality about sixty years ago, is kept on the road because the great American foundations have millions of dollars to spend on it. They continue to spend millions of dollars every year on this rubbish because if they didn't they would have to accept that the billions and billions of dollars already spent on it had been poured down the drain, money wasted. The whole modern art scene is a gigantic anti-American joke, a worldwide conspiracy of intelligent, hard-headed rascals—at any rate in its higher manifestations. There are plenty of dupes and sincere twerps lower down who are able to convince themselves they can spot a nonrelational balancing interrelationship in any American daub they are shown."

■ Some catechists are shocked, simply shocked, by the idea that lay people—meaning people without any kind of professional training or certification—might actually read the *Catechism of the Catholic Church* for themselves. If things are not to be mediated and interpreted by professionals, just what are catechists for, after all? An amusing instance of this is by a John F. Craghan in "The Catechism and Future Catechetics," published by Liguori Publications of Missouri. Craghan reminds the laity that the Catechism is addressed to the bishops, and that catechists will prepare materials fit for lay consumption that "will reflect [our] culture's interpretation of the Catholic tradition." Such materials will replace the "sexist language" with "inclusive language," of course, will reflect the U.S. bishops' teaching on the economy and peace (or one version of that teaching), and will in other respects correct the deficiencies of the Catechism itself. "Theologians, biblicists, historians, liturgists, catechists, etc. will be asked to pool their talents for the good of the community." (Biblicists? Surely he means biblical scholars.) Craghan continues: "That good will also demand their improving certain areas in the Catechism. Loyalty to the tradition also calls for the courage to change." He then adds, "'A disciple is not above the teacher,' Jesus tells us today, 'but everyone who is fully qualified will be like the teacher.'" Clearly the teacher in question is not John Paul II or the Church's magisterium but the catechetical guild. For Craghan and those of like mind, it is likely a cause of deep regret that millions of copies of the Catechism are already in circulation, thus making it too late to chain it to the library post where access could be limited to the catechetically correct. One would not be at all surprised to learn that John Craghan believes himself to be a strong proponent of empowering the laity.

■ The truth is not always shocking, frightening, or novel; sometimes the greatest good sense is found in straightforward and anodyne statements of old-fashioned truths. At their fifteenth meeting, the International Catholic-Jewish Liaison Committee made such a statement, finding shared commitments to the family in Catholic and Jewish traditions. "The family is humanity's most precious resource," the Committee members declared in the joint statement. "The family is far more than a legal, social, or economic unit. For both Catholics and Jews it is a stable community of love and solidarity based on God's covenant. It is uniquely suited to teaching and handing on the cultural, ethical, social, and spiritual values that are essential for the development and well-being of its members and of society. The rights and obligations of the family in these areas do not come from the State but exist prior

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to the State and ultimately have their source in God the Creator." Great differences remain to be discussed in Catholic-Jewish dialogue, but what serious Catholics and Jews have in common is, as this statement reminds us, a continuing commitment to the sort of things that used to seem obvious.

■ Art, said St. Thomas Aquinas, is *recta ratio factibilium*—an activity rightly ordered not to the producer of the work of art, and not to the viewer, but to the work of art itself. Somewhere in the nineteenth century, we seemed to decide that art should be about artists (and so high art and the aesthetes appeared) or that art should be about viewers (and so low art and the philistines appeared). Twentieth-century postmodernists, in claiming to be high artists ironically slumming in low art, are at least seeking some escape from the nineteenth-century division. But the only real possibility for escape requires that we seek through art the object of beauty in all its integrity, consonance, and effulgence (to borrow from St. Thomas again). And that requires artists to have a sense of the Transcendent, a sense—not to put too fine a point on it—of God. There is at least one journal, *Image: A Journal of the Arts and Religion*, that has since 1989 been seeking out writers and visual artists who have this sense of the Transcendent. The world of art in America is nearly as complicated as the world of religion, and even more difficult to address. There is the question of what constitutes authentic religious art. A weak theology makes a weak theologian, while a weak theology doesn't necessarily make a weak artist. But *Image* consistently aims for Christian orthodoxy (broadly construed), and does succeed in finding strong artists. Subscriptions to the quarterly journal may be obtained by calling 1 (800) 815-2997.

■ John Adams Hurson, majority leader of the House of Delegates in Maryland, responds to a citizen who urges him to take a position in favor of the legal protection of the unborn. Mr. Hurson writes: "Being a Roman Catholic, my religion teaches that abortion is the taking of life. But religious beliefs require an act of faith. Incorporating religion into the laws of the state violates the separation of church and state." Seldom is a dumb position stated so flat-footedly. Biology, not religion, teaches that abortion is the taking of life. Further, the real act of faith is to believe that in a democracy the laws of the state can be sustained in isolation from the moral convictions of its citizens, including moral convictions formed by religious faith. By the logic of Mr. Hurson and too many other politicians, the Constitution requires that disagreements about morality must always be resolved in favor of the position that is not supported by religious tradition. It is a logic as embarrassingly incoherent as, for some politicians, it is wondrously expedient.

■ "Thank God I'm alive and my baby is healthy," said Jean Morgan of Hauppauge, Long Island, after being rescued from the trunk of her car where two thugs had locked her in six hours earlier. Mrs. Morgan was five months pregnant. That is from the story in the *New York Times*. On the same morning, the anchor on *New York One*, a local news show, concluded her version of the story with, "Both mother and baby are well." Then a brief look of consternation and this correction, "I mean the fetus, of course."

■ Both Jacob Neusner and Isaac Rottenberg are familiar to FT readers. In the *Journal of Ecumenical Studies*, the latter challenges the former's suggestion that the Jewish-Christian dialogue to date has been pretty much a fraud. Many years ago, Arthur Cohen declared that the idea of a common Judeo-Christian tradition is a "myth," and Neusner agrees. Rottenberg says Neusner is in fact asking us to "accept the fact that Judaism and Christianity are entirely different and essentially unrelated religions." "In short," writes Rottenberg, "Neusner seeks dialogue with a radically de-Judaized Christianity. . . . I believe that to that invitation we must say 'No, thank you.' We have gone that route before; we have done so contrary to the New Testament witness, and it has had disastrous consequences. On that point Christians must simply say 'Never again,' because it would mean a return to bad history and ancient heresies." Rottenberg continues: "For Christians the answer to supersessionism and sinful triumphalism cannot be total separation, because the very soul of the church's kerygma lies in the message of Moses and the prophets to which Jesus claimed to be faithful and to which he wanted to be true—even unto death. Perhaps Neusner is right when he argues that we have gone too far too fast, or at least have prematurely assumed points of consensus where there was still much mutual incomprehension. I see no problem in focusing on Neusner's approach to mutual clarification, but all that, it seems to me, is still pre-dialogical. In the end Jews and Christians must face what Arthur Cohen has called 'a contest of truth.' Such a dialogue will involve a good deal of disputation, but let us hope that we will have learned to do that with a measure of grace and humor."

■ After years of study, the New York State Task Force on Life and the Law came out strongly against the legalizing of assisted suicide. In an editorial titled "Mercy for the Dying," the *New York Times*, all too predictably, criticized the Task Force in harsh terms. Tracy E. Miller, executive director of the Task Force, responded with this letter to the editor: "You

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presume that many patients would want to commit suicide. Many people believe they might opt for suicide rather than endure a vastly diminished quality of life. Yet often when patients are confronted with terminal illness, continued life becomes more precious. Most terminally ill people, when given appropriate relief from pain and depression, even those with AIDS and cancer, do not want to kill themselves. You dismiss the risks of legalizing assisted suicide noted in our report as 'nightmarishly speculative.' We do not presume doctors want to kill their patients to save money. We identify more subtle and pervasive risks: doctors who are caring but too harried to explain the alternatives to patients, those who will recommend suicide without appreciating the profound effect the recommendation will have on patients, and those who will not treat pain and depression before offering death as a preferred option. Undertreatment of pain and depression, which most commonly lead patients to think of suicide, are widespread in clinical practice. 'Burnout' and lack of familiarity with pain relief correlate with physician willingness to endorse or assist suicide. You assume that if we had the right guidelines, abuse or mistakes would be minimized. How many lives lost to abuse or mistake would be too many? How could society enforce any standards for decisions shrouded in the privacy of the doctor-patient relationship? It is also naive to assume assisted suicide could be insulated from bias and social inequality. In a recent study, those treated for cancer at centers that care predominantly for minority patients were three times less likely to get adequate pain relief. Blacks are also far less likely than whites to get such procedures as coronary bypass surgery. Mercy for the dying is an undebatable goal, but we must not endanger the vulnerable."

■ On the one hand, there is the ordination of women, and, on the other, the move toward lay presidency at the Eucharist. In the Anglican communion, both are going on at the same time, and are frequently supported by the same people. The diocese of Sydney, Australia, has already approved lay presidency, and it is being debated elsewhere. Some women protest lay presidency, wondering what's the big deal about being ordained if ordination doesn't matter. Monica Furlong, an English activist and author, sees no contradiction between campaigning for the ordination of women and having the Eucharist without an ordained person presiding. At her St. Hilda's community, one lay person says the words "for convenience," but the idea is that "the whole community does the celebrating." "The priesthood of women is about declericalizing the Church," she says, "changing it in a way that makes it inclusive. The unseen priesthood is what interests me more than the lay presidency. What we are about is eating supper together in the context of Christ, and that is a moving experience." Paraphrasing Flannery O'Connor's famous retort to Mary McCarthy: If it's just a moving experience, I say to hell with it.

■ Reviewing a book on American exiles in Paris, Christopher Lehmann-Haupt of the *New York Times* refers to "Maurice Girodias, best known as a purveyor of pornography in his famous Olympia Press but also not incidentally the publisher of such modern classics as Nabokov's *Lolita*, J. P. Donleavy's *Ginger Man*, Burroughs' *Naked Lunch*, and Pauline Reage's *Story of O*." So it isn't as though Girodias only published pornography.

■ It's playing in Peoria. In 1991 there were 1,210 divorces in Peoria. That year the clergy there adopted "Community Marriage Policy" (CMP), and in 1992 there were 947 divorces. Cause-effect relations are hard to prove beyond reasonable doubt, but in twenty-seven cities across the country clergy are persuaded that CMP is making a difference. CMP is the brainchild of religion columnist Michael McManus, who has written a book and, with the help of the Southern Baptists and the American Family Association, put together instructive videos under the title *Marriage Savers*. The idea is that clergy and local churches agree not to marry couples who have not prepared for marriage, and to foster "church interventions" to save marriages in trouble. In six videos, couples discuss how their lives were changed by church interventions that helped them to avoid a bad marriage before it starts, to obtain "marriage insurance" as engaged couples, to strengthen existing marriages, to save even deeply troubled marriages, to reconcile separated and divorced couples, to enable the divorced to recover, and to help people avoid a second divorce. Everybody is talking about the importance of family formation and saving marriages; Mike McManus and his growing host of friends are doing something about it. For information, write him at 9500 Michael's Court, Bethesda, MD 20817.

■ Ken Burns brought us *The Civil War* on PBS a couple of years ago, and it was something extraordinary. Since then there have been a number of shamelessly imitative spin-offs. For instance, Burns' own *Baseball*, which was properly scorched by George Weigel for its political correctness (*Commentary*, November 1994). Both spin-off and rip-off was Paul and Ellen Wagner's *Out of Ireland*, also shown on PBS. The two-hour program acknowledged that Catholicism had something to do with the immigrant Irish, and so the Catholic Church got three minutes of attention, along with Irish views on leprechauns, fairies, and other superstitions. *Out of Ireland* repeatedly projected photographs over the reading of letters to which the people in the photographs had no connection, and

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laced the program with generally banal commentators striving, and pathetically failing, to do what Shelby Foote did for *The Civil War*. Of course the Irish immigration was not the Civil War, but millions of people fleeing from oppression and hunger to find a new life in a new world is a story not devoid of dramatic possibilities.

■ The usually sensible and entertaining *Spectator* (London) has David Caute, of all people, review the much-discussed book *The Secret World of American Communism* by Harvey Klehr et al. (Yale University Press). If the review is meant as entertainment, it doesn't quite come off. Drawing on newly opened Soviet archives, *The Secret World*, almost all scholars agree, demolishes the lie that American Communists were simply "liberals in a hurry." The archives resoundingly vindicate Whittaker Chambers and others who depicted Communists in the U.S. as active agents in the pay and under the direction of the Soviet Union, and dedicated to the betrayal of their country for the sake of The Revolution. The problem is that Mr. Caute is one of the chief perpetrators of the old lie, having in 1978 published *The Great Fear: The Anti-Communist Purge Under Truman and Eisenhower*, the gist of which was to pooh-pooh any Communist threat and demonstrate how Joe McCarthy and his minions brought liberty-loving Americans to their knees. In 1995 David Caute can and does write, "The Soviet threat, whether real or perceived, served as a pretext for reversing the New Deal and keeping Negroes in their place." Whether real or perceived? Faced by Klehr & Co. with irrefutable documentary proof that he had been duped all these years, Caute can only react with an extended and irrelevant complaint that the Yale scholars have received handsome foundation support for their research. That such research is well supported is hardly surprising; not nearly so surprising as David Caute having access to the pages of the *Spectator* for his continuing exercises in mendacity.

■ According to our local paper, a Dr. Mark Siegler, who, as they say, "does" medical ethics at the University of Chicago, was holding forth on the marvelous new technologies for extending life. "A generation ago," Dr. Siegler said, "death was not optional." Think about it.

■ Rodney Clapp of InterVarsity Press is ambivalent about the ascendancy of religious conservatives in our political culture. "One way the religious right can be read is as the latest manifestation of the evangelical refusal to admit and accept the passing of Americanized Constantinianism—which basically means evangelicalism's own hegemony over the culture. The religious right tenaciously, if vaguely, holds to the memory of the evangelical religious, legislative, and educational domination of this country that did not erode until the late nineteenth century. A few years ago, historian Douglas Frank provocatively suggested that American evangelicals in the late nineteenth and early twentieth centuries switched from a postmillenial to a premillennial eschatology because they lost control of the nation. Put oversimply, when things were under their reign, evangelicals easily assumed God was triumphing through their regnant institutions. When the Lord returned, he would be greeted by a materially triumphant church. But when things were no longer under their reign, evangelicals assumed the country was going to hell, yet ingeniously gained another sort of control by claiming to possess ultimately powerful knowledge—the exact timetable for the Lord's return, and the way to escape God's wrath while seeing justice done to those who resisted the true way. Such an eschatology allows—if not encourages—the anger and fear now so pervasive among conservative evangelicals. It expects matters to grow worse and worse (read, more and more out of evangelical control), eventually pitting out in an absolute moral and social nadir just before Jesus returns. Whatever its strengths, this eschatology is terribly susceptible to an ugly and smug spirit of triumphalism. There is little about it that urges conservative evangelicals to beware their own sinful and self-deceptive construals of unfolding history." Clapp agrees that there is a great deal of bigotry, especially on campuses and in the media, against Christian conservatives, but the bigotry is mixed with legitimate anxiety that evangelicals are trying to get back at the culture that disestablished them. "Then, I want to say, they are not only failing to be politically correct. They are failing to be theologically correct."

■ Christian Reconstructionists, sometimes called theonomists, keep on ploughing their eccentric Calvinist furrow, and along the way turn up new ideological enemies and even heresies. Pessimillennialism, for instance. *Chalcedon Report*, the chief Reconstructionist voice, notes: "One of the most devastating ideological strongholds that inhibits the development and implementation of a consistent biblical worldview is what is now popularly known as Pessimillennialism." Within the constricted world of Reconstructionism, ten people being aware of something makes it popularly known. The author continues, "Pessimillennialism is the belief that regardless of what Christians do, it is God's plan that the Church (and thus Christian culture) suffer inevitable disaster and defeat in this age. Pessimillennialism thus robs Christians of the expectation of and motivation for victory in time." In view of what might be described as theonomy's Optimillennialist plans for reconstructing society on the basis of its understanding of "Bible Law," a measured sympathy for the Pessimillennialists is

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perhaps in order.

■ In Bergamo in Northern Italy there is an order of nuns with the hefty name of Little Sisters of the Poor of the Palazzolo Institute. They have medical sisters working all over Africa, including Zaire, where six have died from the Ebola virus, having been infected while ministering to others with the disease. Sister Bakita Sartore was asked whether the sisters who died might have taken greater precautions. She said, "You cannot care for the poor in astronaut suits."

■ In an editorial bemoaning President Clinton's flip-flopping on almost every question he addresses, the *New Republic* concludes: "It would be pitiful, if it weren't so deeply depressing." Or maybe it would be deeply depressing, if it weren't so pitiful. Or something.

■ In speeches and in letters written on official embassy stationery, Raymond L. Flynn, U.S. Ambassador to the Vatican and former Mayor of Boston, has been taking it upon himself to explain that Catholic social teaching comes down on President Clinton's side in his battles with the Republican Congress. A couple of years of breathing the wisdom of the eternal city produces insights such as these: "As with all human undertakings, some of the Great Society programs to assist the poor and disadvantaged did not work according to their promise, but we have to be careful not to throw the baby out with the bath water." Flynn notes that some Republicans have criticized him "for pointing out the similarity between Catholic social teaching and the Clinton Administration programs to assist the poor." He is unfazed. "I do not see the conflict. The Vatican and the present administration do disagree on many things, but not on the necessity to assist the poor and less fortunate." Those who oppose Mr. Clinton, it is understood, are against helping the poor and less fortunate. Our sources in Rome would like to have it understood that Raymond Flynn does not represent the Holy See in the American political fray. Since he obviously does not understand the job, perhaps it is time to get somebody else to do what Ambassador Flynn is paid to do, namely, represent the U.S. to the Holy See.

■ The letter is addressed to "Dear Freedom-Loving American," so of course we read it eagerly. It begins with a fictional news story dated April 27, 2003, which tells about the execution of a woman who obtained an abortion, and goes on this way: "Imagine, if you can, an America in which a thirty-year-old woman could be put to death for aborting a fetus that had no chance of survival—and that might have caused *her* death as well! Or an America in which you could get thrown in jail just for *possessing* a book illustrating 'forbidden' love-making techniques. Or owning a contraceptive device. . . . Or bearing a child out of wedlock. Or—heaven help you!—living with the opposite sex without 'benefit of clergy.' Imagine a long prison term, without parole, for publishing a book that challenged the existence of the supernatural. Or six months' hard labor for 'taking the Lord's name in vain.' . . ." It goes on in that vein for four pages, all this promoting "*FREE INQUIRY*: THE VOICE TO COUNTER THE DEMAGOGUES!" The magazine is published by the Council for Democratic and Secular Humanism in Amherst, New York (Professor Paul Kurtz, bishop and founder). One shudders to think of the pickle we'd be in if we didn't have such a sober and dispassionate voice to counter the demagogues.

■ Those who were on the ground floor of launching the enterprise called biomedical ethics—people such as Leon Kass, Paul Ramsey, Edmund Pellegrino, and Dan Callahan—were not entirely sure that it could ever become a discipline, and the more thoughtful participants in the enterprise are not sure that it has. A medical ethicist, it is said, is someone who declares himself to be such and is recognized as such by others who have declared themselves to be such. But much the same can be said of any discipline. Presumably they are people who have thought a lot about medicine and ethics in the company of others who have thought a lot about medicine and ethics. In any event, the discipline, even presenting itself as a profession, is with us, and is not likely to go away soon. On the contrary, as these folk (sometimes called bioethicists) encounter more problems (and produce more problems), their services become increasingly mandatory. Not least of all because people in the research and practical ends of medicine need somebody around to give them ethical permission to do what they want to do, and there has to be a body of people who are authorized to hand out permission slips. In short, one views biomedical ethics with a measure of ambivalence. Since it is around, however, it is worth knowing what these people are up to, which is why a new monthly publication may be of interest to some readers. It is called *Moral Community: The Monthly Digest of Health Care Ethics News*, and is edited by Philip Foubert. (A one-year subscription is $109 from Ethics Consultation Services, 38003 Hood Canal Drive N.E., Hansville, WA 98340.)

■ By describing himself as a "bloodless utilitarian," Robert Wright of the *New Republic* perhaps signals a certain uneasiness about his bloody argument. In his regular "TRB" column, Wright asks why people make such a big deal about China scheduling the execution of prisoners to get body parts for sale to rich patients. He allows that China shouldn't be sentencing people to death for their political beliefs, but, since they do, it would be a shame to let fresh corpses go to waste. Anyway, Wright notes, the rich get preferential medical treatment in America, too.

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As for the really bad guys, we owe them nothing. "If after Ted Bundy's execution you could have given his liver to some child who would otherwise die, would you have done so? . . . If accelerating Ted Bundy's death by a week would save the life of your son or daughter or sibling, would the idea acquire some moral plausibility?" In the pages of the *New Republic* this passes for moral philosophy. As for the Chinese marketing the organs of executed prisoners, Wright says that "we don't have enough data to deem the practice immoral in some universal, self-evident sense." Data? It is a word that would occur only to bloodless utilitarians as being pertinent to forming a judgment about the killing and exploitation of human beings.

■ "The importance of maintaining appropriate regard for nascent human life cannot be overstated." That's from the conclusion of a little medical ethics essay by Sister Jean deBois of the Saint Louis University Medical Center. "Appropriate" is such a convenient word. It enables Sister Jean not to let regard for nascent human life get in the way of her conclusion that "once the diagnosis of anencephaly has been made the pregnancy may be terminated at any time." Anencephalic babies are missing major portions of the brain and die within a few hours of birth. The official *Ethical and Religious Directives for Catholic Health Facilities* says that "Abortion, that is, the directly intended termination of pregnancy before viability, is never permitted." The common practice is to wait until the baby reaches the stage of viability when labor is induced, the baby is delivered, and then is given "comfort care" and allowed to die. Employing the ethical theory of proportionalism, Sr. Jean proposes that "viability" be redefined so as to apply only to "a live born infant having the capacity for continued, integrated growth and development." Given the "emotional trauma" experienced by a couple upon diagnosis of anencephaly, and given the fact that the baby will never be "viable" by the criteria proposed, abortion is permissible at any time. The essay does not challenge the pernicious use of prenatal testing undertaken with an eye toward aborting the unfit. Moreover, given the plasticity of criteria such as "continued, integrated growth and development," combined with the appeal to the psychological suffering of the mother, the logic invites an extension to the possibility of eliminating almost any unwanted child. While presumably being limited to the rare instances of anencephaly, the structure of the argument is indistinguishable from that employed by the proponents of abortion on demand. It is not surprising that, according to informed sources, at St. Louis University Medical Center handicapped babies have been aborted, sterilizations are performed, and contraception is commonly prescribed. In the current climate of health care restructuring, many Catholic institutions are entering into new relationships with non-Catholic facilities, and it seems likely that statements about "appropriate regard for nascent human life" will increasingly accent the "appropriate." Appropriate—as in proportion to the good to be achieved by doing evil.

■ The toy Doberman snaps again. When Senator Bob Dole criticized Time Warner for exploiting sundry human depravities, Frank Rich of the *New York Times* charged that he was flirting with anti-Semitism because the CEO of Time Warner is Jewish. To which the formidable Michael Medved responds in the Jewish weekly, *Forward*: "Leave it to a Frank Rich to try to strengthen in the public's mind the association of Hollywood irresponsibility with Jewish people. It's absolutely ludicrous for anyone to suggest that criticism of Hollywood is by its nature anti-Semitic." Why, some of our best friends agree with Frank Rich, which does not necessarily make them anti-Semites. They do not really intend to discredit legitimate concern about anti-Semitism. Mr. Rich, we assume, does not intend to do that either. It seems he just can't help himself.

■ "In the Case of Pat Robertson" in the August issue of *Commentary* is a brilliant inquiry by Norman Podhoretz into charges of anti-Semitism brought against Robertson and, more generally, against the Christian Right. After weighing the evidence with care, and censuring Robertson's delinquencies on several scores, Mr. Podhoretz concludes that Jews should recognize in Robertson and the movement he represents a friend and ally. A similar conclusion is reached by Toby Bulman Katz, writing in the Summer 1995 issue of *Jewish Action*, a publication of the Union of Orthodox Jewish Congregations of America. Criticizing the attacks on Christian activists by the Anti-Defamation League (ADL) and others, Katz writes: "If the United States becomes a noticeably more religious country over the next few years, Jews, especially secular Jews, may feel a certain level of psychological discomfort. However, the specific goals of the Christian Right are goals which Torah-true Jews generally share. Furthermore, trying to thwart the popular will is more likely to provoke than to prevent anti-Semitism. We should show a face of friendship and commonality rather than one of rejection and enmity to the newly reemerging Christian majority, while maintaining a certain inevitable wariness. It is particularly saddening to see Jews, the people who gave the world the Bible, treating religious believers as the enemy, merely because they love our Book too well. Where right-wing groups or individuals cross the line into anti-Semitism or bigotry, the ADL has the right and the duty to sound the alarm. But it is not part of the ADL's mandate to involve itself in partisan political battles."

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■ Of course it's a lie, but the sheer brazenness of it elicits something akin to respect. It's this week's new Bible translation (it does seem there is one every week), which is, as is all too often the case, no translation at all. This one is called *The Inclusive New Testament* and is published by an outfit called Priests for Equality in Hyattsville, Maryland. Read what Anne Carr, professor of theology at the University of Chicago, no less, says about it: "The text reads smoothly and beautifully, betraying no other agenda than a faithful rendition of the New Testament." Uh huh. Then read the allegedly faithful rendition of, for instance, Colossians 3:18f. But first recall the passage (Revised Standard Version): "Wives, be subject to your husbands, as is fitting in the Lord. Husbands, love your wives, and do not be harsh with them. Children, obey your parents in everything, for this pleases the Lord." And so forth. Now the same (so to speak) passage in *The Inclusive New Testament*: "You who are in committed relationships, be submissive to each other. This is your duty in Christ Jesus. Partners joined by God, love each other. Avoid any bitterness between you." And so forth. What to do when faced with a problematic text? Simply to say it is wrong might offend the faithful. Explaining how it really says what one wishes it to say takes effort, and may be unpersuasive. The much easier, albeit dishonest, thing is to rewrite the text and call it a translation. Professor Carr is the author of *Transforming Grace*. Watch for her next book, *Transforming Texts*.

■ (1) Reporters, talk show producers, and other media drones who tell you how much and how long they have admired your work, and then begin the interview with the question, "Have you written anything about religion in America?" (2) College students who say they are writing a paper on you and ask you to send them a fifteen-page summary of your thought on this or that. In other words, Please write my paper for me. (3) Writers of three-page letters who saw something you said in a newspaper, offer ten points in objection, demand an explicit and detailed response to each, and are offended when you politely suggest that they read an article or at least look at a book in which you have dealt with exactly the points raised. (4) Strangers who send you a four-hundred-page manuscript and insist upon a dust jacket blurb because it is the most important book to be published in the last couple of centuries, and because you are favorably quoted in a footnote on page 273. The foregoing are among our least favorite things about this job. Please don't do them. This plea is prompted by all of them happening, once again, this week.

■ "The almost total identification of the Religious Right with the new Republican majority in Washington is a dangerous liaison of religion with political power." That's from a "Cry for Renewal" signed by a hundred folk described as religious leaders, and written by our old friend Jim Wallis of *Sojourners* and the *Christian Century*'s favorite evangelical, sociologist Tony Campolo. There is indeed a danger in the liaison between religion and political power, but it seems somewhat late, if not disingenuous, for some of the signers to be pointing that out. Jim Wallis, Presiding Bishop Edmond Browning of the Episcopal Church, and Joan Campbell Brown of the National Council of Churches (NCC) have devoted most of their lives to cultivating the liaison between religion and liberal politics. (Why the declaration carries the signature of J. I. Packer is a puzzlement.) Frank Rich of the *New York Times* loved the statement, declaring that "Christians flee the Christian Coalition." He quotes one of the signers, Robert Brooks, who flatly declares, "I tell you that the Christian Coalition does not speak for me, and it does not speak for the Episcopal Church." So there. That should decisively scotch the rumor that Ralph Reed had enlisted the support of the Episcopal Church in exchange for taking over its multi-million dollar debts resulting from embezzlement and general mismanagement. Refusing to compromise their integrity, the Episcopalians and the NCC will just have to find some other way of paying last month's phone bill. "Cry for Renewal" repeatedly claims to speak for "biblical faith," which is defined exclusively in terms moral, social, and political. In this curious version of "biblical faith" there is not a mention of sin, redemption, the cross, resurrection, or the hope of glory. We counted one reference to God and one to Jesus, the latter only to point out that he teaches us not "to abandon or blame the poor for their oppression." We are told that "religious faith and values" should make public discourse "more honest, moral, civil, and spiritually sensitive." The statement alludes to many questions that we need to engage in a more honest, moral, civil, and spiritually sensitive way. Among the questions *not* mentioned are: abortion, euthanasia, parental choice in education, religion in public schools, welfare dependency, crime, divorce, and collapsing family structures. "Cry for Renewal" is, in sum, a patently partisan attack on the "dangerous liaison of religion with political power" by those whose party used to be in charge of that liaison. It refuses to address the issues that most divide Americans, it exacerbates the incivility that it deplores, and it has little or nothing to do with biblical faith. But in this season of their discontent, we should perhaps not begrudge the Frank Riches of American religion and culture whatever scraps of consolation they can scavenge from the rubble of their former rule.

■ I suppose it was supposed to be something like an exposé. Writing in the *Christian Century*, Leon Howell reports that organizations such as the Institute on Religion and Public Life and the Ethics

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and Public Policy Center receive grants from foundations. His article concludes with this, "Neoconservatives have shown not only that they are ready and eager to battle over the shape of the culture, but that they are willing to invest in the journals and think tanks that help mobilize the troops. Neuhaus, [George] Weigel, and others might say that neoconservatives have flourished in the culture wars largely on the strength of their ideas. But the money from [foundations] hasn't hurt." He is entirely right about that, of course. The ideas haven't hurt either. Actually, Mr. Howell is something of an expert on the indispensability of building a support base among readers and contributors. Two years ago, as editor, he presided over the demise of the once distinguished liberal publication *Christianity & Crisis*, which died of terminal lack of interest.

■ "Father Neuhaus is a man who on occasion plays fast and loose with the truth," reports the *Christian News*, a national publication issuing from New Haven, Missouri. Back in February, I noted in these pages that when I was a boy the Lutheran Church—Missouri Synod, to which I belonged, taught that it was "the true visible church on earth." *Christian News* offers this clarification: "No serious Missouri Synod theologian ever contended that the LC-MS is, in and of itself, the true visible church. The LC-MS and other confessional Lutheran bodies have always held that the Evangelical Lutheran Church is the true visible church. The Evangelical Lutheran Church encompasses all church bodies and synods that hold to God's inerrant Word, the Holy Bible, and to the Book of Concord as a correct and true exposition of the Holy Scriptures." I stand corrected. I should have said that the Missouri Synod taught that the Missouri Synod and other bodies that are in agreement with the Missouri Synod constitute the true visible church on earth. The way I put it made it sound as though the teaching represented a somewhat narrow view of the comprehensiveness of the one, holy, catholic, and apostolic Church.

■ Our most influential American church historian, Martin E. Marty, notes in his newsletter, *Context*, some data from *Jews and the New American Scene*

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by Seymour Martin Lipset and Earl Raab (Harvard University Press), a book on which we have previously commented. Jews, who are approximately 2 percent of the American population, "have made up 50 percent of the top two hundred intellectuals, 40 percent of American Nobel Prize-winners in science and economics, 20 percent of the professors at the leading universities, 21 percent of high-level civil servants, 40 percent of partners in the leading law firms of New York and Washington, 26 percent of the reporters, editors, and executives of the major print and broadcast media, and 59 percent of the directors, writers, and producers of the fifty top-grossing motion pictures." Marty then asks, "What will Pat Robertson do with such statistics?" The more pertinent question is, What is Martin Marty doing with such statistics? Apart from taking a mean-spirited swipe at Pat Robertson, that is. Pat Robertson has been quite clear about what he makes of the role of Jews and Judaism in modern history (see "Anti-Semitism and Our Common Future," June/July 1995). Robertson believes that Jews are God's chosen people, recognizes the talent and energy of many Jews, has placed Jews in high positions in his organizations, and is a generous supporter of Israel. Robertson is, to put it gently, no historian, and he has no doubt said many things that can and should be faulted. Not among them, to the best of our knowledge, is implying that those with whom he disagrees are anti-Semitic. Or perhaps that is not what Professor Marty intended to suggest with his question, "What will Pat Robertson do with such statistics?"

■ On the day the London *Times* ran a story about a Church of England bishop who succeeded in raising an eyebrow or two by explaining the expendability of yet another cardinal doctrine of the faith, this letter to the editor appeared (from a man who lives on "Church Street" in Somerset): "Sir, There doesn't seem very much left for us agnostics not to believe in."

Sources: Avery Dulles on the Catholic Church and the press, *America*, October 1, 1994. Terry Teachout on new generation of composers, *Commentary*, April 1995. Arthur Koestler article cited in *Catholic World Report*, August/September 1994.

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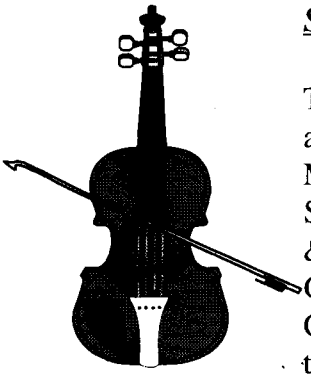

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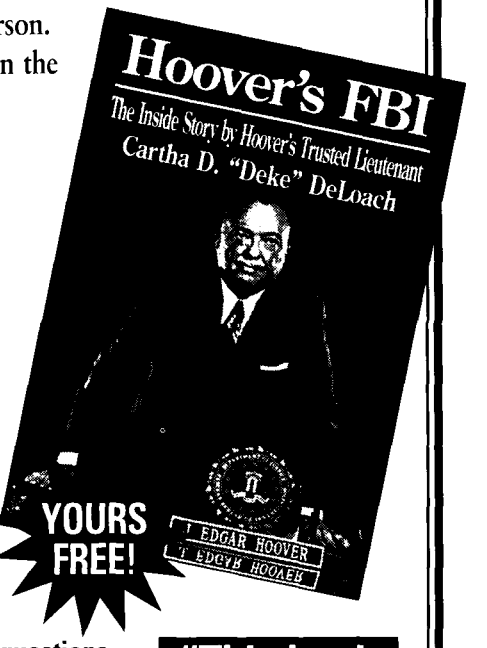

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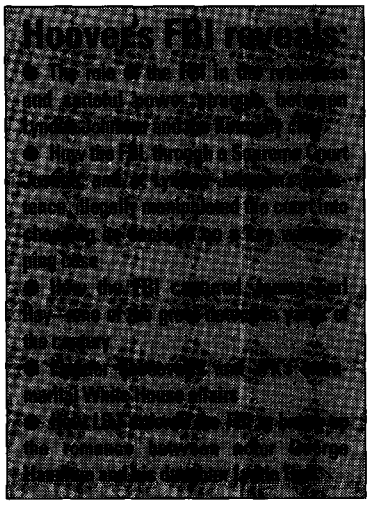

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